Empirical Dogmatics

Volume 2

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Metropolitan of Nafpaktos
Hierotheos

Empirical Dogmatics

of the Orthodox Catholic Church

according to the Spoken Teaching
of **Father John Romanides**

Volume 2

Holy Trinity – Creation – Fall
Incarnation – Church
Life after Death

Critical Presentation

Birth of the Theotokos Monastery
(Pelagia)

To

Abbess Photini

of blessed memory,
a student of Fr. John Romanides,
who lived and departed this life
with inspiration
and enjoys the heavenly Liturgy
to her heart's content

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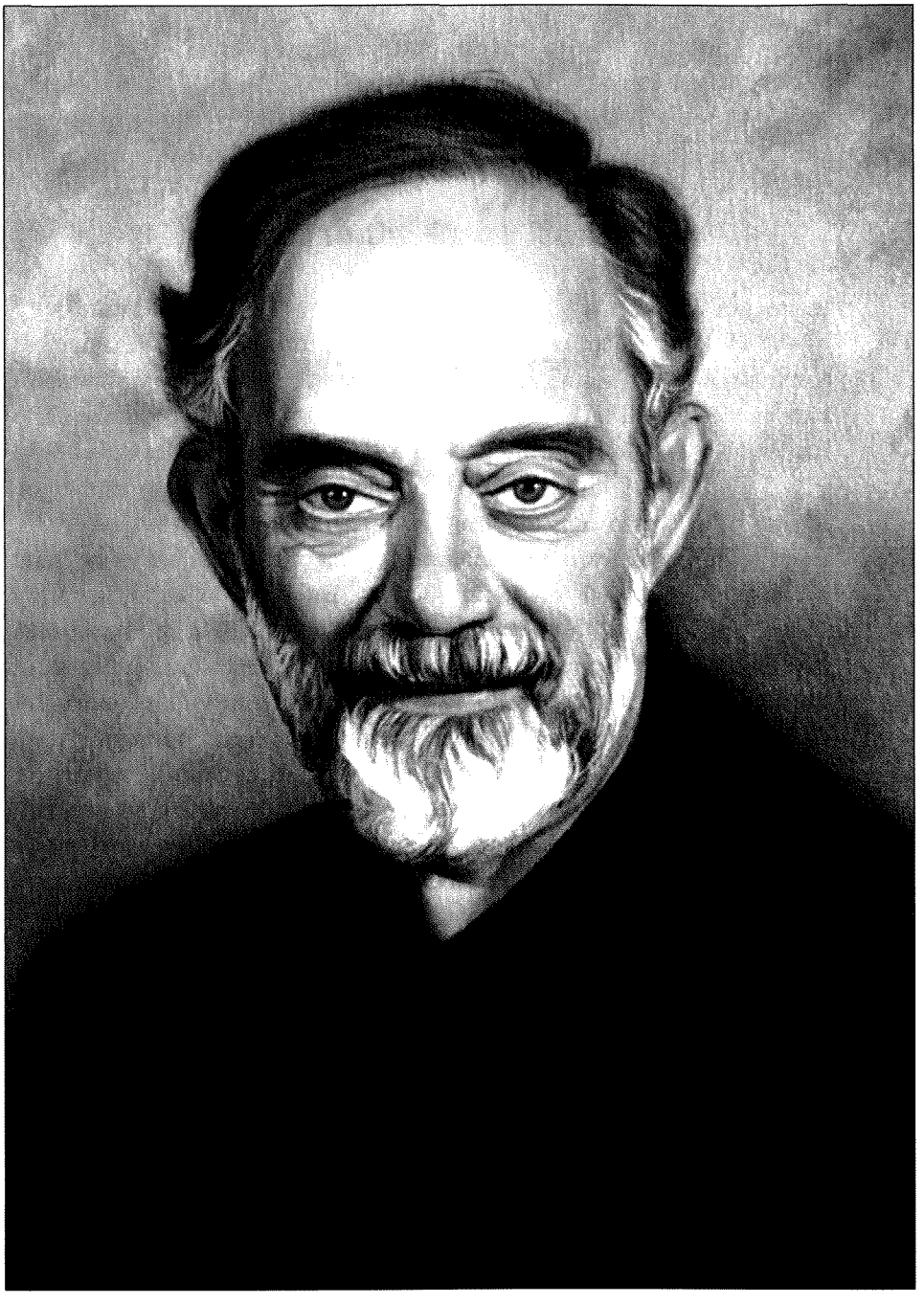

Fr. John Romanides in a portrait by Nikos Kalatzes

Preface to the Greek Edition

A short time ago I published Volume 1 of the book 'Empirical Dogmatics' according to the spoken addresses of the late Fr. John Romanides, with four chapters: 'Dogma and Ethics', 'The Experience of Revelation', 'The Bearers of Revelation' and 'The Living Monuments of Revelation'. That book was actually an introduction to the empirical dogmatics of the Orthodox Church.

In the present book particular issues are addressed, such as the theology of the Holy Trinity, the creation of the world, the Fall of man, the incarnation of the Word, the Church as the Body of Christ and a communion of glorification, and life after death.*

It should be noted that a full dogmatic analysis of these subjects according to the whole tradition of the Church is not undertaken, but these dogmatic issues will be emphasised from the point of view of experience. That is to say, they are linked with the empirical knowledge that can be gained of them. In particular, there is an analysis of how dogmas are the fruit of the experience of divine vision granted to the Prophets, Apostles and Fathers, and how dogmas are subsequently converted into personal experience, becoming blood and nourishment for our spiritual organism.

The basis of all the analyses is that the God-seeing Prophets, Apostles and Fathers have authentic and direct knowledge of God, and we who accept them and follow them have indirect knowledge of God. We can, however, if we really live within the Church, acquire direct knowledge of God.

This analysis, as in Volume 1, is carried out according to the spoken addresses of Professor John Romanides of blessed memory. Complete passages are cited from his tape recorded talks, which were delivered to a variety of audiences, and they are also expounded on the basis of

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* **glorification** = *theosis*. See 'Note by the Author' p. 37 – Translator's note

his teaching. In very rare instances, in order to complete his theological thinking, I have introduced extracts from his various writings. I try not to refer to patristic texts – with a few exceptions – in order to keep the message simple and effective.

The fact that his words in the extracts cited come from spoken addresses creates some problems of expression [in Greek], *increased by the fact that Fr. John grew up in America. Also, the repetition of his views is due, on the one hand, to his having become completely certain of some things and, on the other, to the fact that the extracts are taken from different talks. The reader, however, should leave all this aside and focus on the essence of his words.*

I should like to mention here, as in Volume 1, that readers ought not to concentrate their attention on one point that may provoke them and distract them from Fr. John's teaching in its entirety. Instead they should study the whole of his thinking, which extends across all the chapters of both volumes.

The difficulties that readers may encounter in the first chapter, due to its dogmatic subject, the Triune God, should not discourage them from continuing with the rest of the study, which deals with important subjects in a simple manner.

It should be noted that in the chapter on the creation of the world and elsewhere, the scientific information used by Fr. John is drawn from the knowledge available at that time. On some points today this has been revised. We quote here exactly what he said, however, to demonstrate his investigative spirit and to make it clear that he followed the progress of research in the positive sciences.

I glorify God for this new gift. I thank my collaborators, who helped me with this publication as well, and whose names I list in Volume 1. I want to refer here to the iconographer Yannis Yeremtzes, who took care of the covers of both volumes. I beseech God to help us not to be only theoretical teachers, but disciples in experiencing the dogmas in our personal life, that we may share in the Kingdom of heaven.

Written in Nafpaktos on the 1st November
2010, anniversary of the decease (2001)
of Fr. John Romanides

†The Metropolitan of Nafpaktos Hierotheos

Introduction

In the Introduction and Epilogue to Volume 1, as well as in the Biographical Information on the life of Fr. John Romanides, the presuppositions of his theology were identified. The reader should bear these in mind in order to understand everything written in this volume without difficulty. Here, by way of introduction, we shall define the development of his theological thought in relation to the subjects presented in this volume, which refer to God, His relationship with the world, the Fall of man, his glorification within the Church and his eternal life.

From the beginning of his theological activity, Fr. John Romanides interpreted and explained these issues in his doctoral thesis, entitled *The Ancestral Sin*[1]. The chapters of this work refer to God's relationship with the world, the existence of Satan, the destiny of man, the spiritual man as created in God's image, and, finally, the interpretation according to Orthodox teaching of the meaning of the ancestral sin.

At that time he wrote various articles interpreting the teaching of the holy Fathers on the unincarnate and incarnate Word, man before and after the Fall and his ecclesiastical life. We mention a few of these to give an indication: *Man and his True Life according to the Greek Orthodox Service Book* (1955), *Original Sin according to St Paul* (1955-6), *Orthodox Ecclesiology according to Alexis Khomiakov* (1956), *The Ecclesiology of St Ignatius of Antioch* (Atlanta 1956), *Justin Martyr and the Fourth Gospel* (1958). There are also three important articles written in English and published in the periodical *Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, which have been translated into Greek by Professor Despo Lialiou but not published. The first is entitled *H. A. Wolfson's Philosophy of the Church Fathers* (1959-60), the second, *Notes on the Palamite Controversy and related Topics - Part 1* (1960-61), and the third has the same title, but is *Part 2* (1963-64).

1. John Romanides, *To propatoriko amartima*, 2nd edition, pub. Domos, Athens 1989 - in Greek

We should also refer to the publication of Volume 1 of *Dogmatic and Symbolic Theology of the Orthodox Catholic Church*[2], which refers to Trinitarian dogma. Unfortunately he did not continue the development of the remaining dogmatic topics, except in *An Outline of Orthodox Patristic Dogmatics*, which Protopresbyter George Dragas translated into English and published in English and Greek with an introduction and a bibliography[3].

It is significant that, following the theoretical analysis of these topics, he occupied himself with the neptic* teaching of the Church as the method by which man can be renewed and glorified. He made a complete theological journey, which could be said to have two stages: the ancestral sin and the Church's neptic teaching. I think this relationship between these two stages of Fr. John Romanides' theological journey should be noted here.

1. His Unified Theological Teaching

To make clear the unity of Fr. John Romanides' theological teaching we shall set out here the relationship between his thesis on *The Ancestral Sin*, which he wrote at the outset of his academic activity, and the neptic tradition of the Church, about which he frequently spoke in his final years.

His concern with the question of what is meant by ancestral sin arose out of the environment in which he found himself in America and his search for the theology of the Church on the creation of the world and the Fall of man.

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2. Protopresbyter Fr. John S. Romanides, *Dogmatiki kai symboliki theologia tis Orthodoxou Katholikis Ekklisias*, Vol. 1, pub. Pournaras, Thessaloniki 1973 – in Greek

3. Protopresbyter John Romanides, *An Outline of Orthodox Patristic Dogmatics*, edited and translated with an introduction and bibliography by Protopresbyter George Dion. Dragas, pub. Orthodox Research Institute, Rollinsford, New Hampshire 2004

* **Neptic**, ***nēptikos*** in Greek: a technical term in the hesychastic tradition meaning watchful and vigilant with regard to thoughts (*logismoi*) to ensure that they do not enter the heart. The corresponding Greek noun *nēpsis* is translated as vigilance or watchfulness. – Translator's note

It is well known that Fr. John lived from his infancy in America and grew up there. He studied in Papal* and Protestant academic centres and was very familiar with their theology, including that of Thomas Aquinas and the main Protestant theologians. The Protestants denied the patristic tradition and only studied Holy Scripture, whereas the Papal theologians relied on Thomas Aquinas - who interpreted Augustine - but also on other scholastic theologians. This contrast between the two Christian traditions (Papal and Protestant) prompted Fr. John Romanides to spend more time on what are called the Apostolic Fathers, that is to say, the Fathers who were the successors of the holy Apostles and preceded the great Fathers of the 4th century.

This was a brilliant move, because in this way he diagnosed that the Apostolic Fathers are the connecting link between the Apostles and the later great Fathers of the Church, and this link remained unbroken. The teaching of the holy Apostles was conveyed to later generations through the Apostolic Fathers. When we speak of the Apostolic Fathers, we mean St Clement of Rome, the writers of the works *The Shepherd of Hermas* and the *Epistle of Barnabas*, St Ignatius the Godbearer, St Polycarp of Smyrna and Papias of Hierapolis. Also associated with them is St Irenaeus of Lyons and Hippolytus of Rome.

Consequently he studied all the Apostolic Fathers, but also the *Great Prayer Book* of the Church, in the spirit of the teaching of the holy Apostles, in parallel, on the one hand, with the Orthodox Fathers and, on the other, with Western scholastic and Protestant theologians. After various preliminary studies, to which we have referred, he finally decided upon the subject of ancestral sin. The complete course of his theological thinking is clear from the subtitle of his thesis on *The Ancestral Sin.*

In a handwritten exercise book that I have in my possession, which dates from the time when he was preparing the subject, before he recorded his theological views in his well-known thesis, the title and subtitle of the work were stated as follows: *The Ancestral Sin, that is, its cosmological and anthropological presuppositions in the early Church compared with certain presuppositions of later Greek patristic theology*

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* **Papal (*Papikos*)** = Roman Catholic. See 'Note by the Author' p. 37 - Translator's note

and western scholastic theology, particularly that of Augustine, Anselm and Aquinas. This is the first conception of the subject. In this exercise book there are passages from the New Testament, which have been grouped according to subject, apparently by reading the whole New Testament in the light of his subject. There are also patristic texts from the Apostolic Fathers and the Fathers of the 4th century, namely, St Athanasios the Great, St Basil the Great, St Gregory of Nyssa, St John Chrysostom and other Fathers, as well as St Dionysios the Areopagite and St Maximos the Confessor.

In his typewritten thesis, which has come into my possession, handwritten corrections to phrases and interpolations, with additions to the text, comments and so on, are visible. It is evidently the text of the thesis that was submitted to the Theological School in Athens. In it he has decided on the title and subtitle of his work as follows. The typewritten text reads: *The Ancestral Sin, that is, its cosmological and anthropological presuppositions from the time of the New Testament until St Irenaeus.* In a handwritten note he writes: *Contributions to the doctrine of the Ancestral Sin, that is, its presuppositions in the Early Church until St Irenaeus in comparison with Orthodox Theology and Western Theology until Thomas Aquinas.*

In the final text, which was published by Pournaras, the title and subtitle of his thesis have been determined as follows: *The Ancestral Sin, that is, Contributions to research into the presuppositions of the doctrine of the Ancestral Sin in the Early Church until St Irenaeus in comparison with the general trend of Orthodox Theology and Western Theology until Thomas Aquinas.*

The writer's revision of the subtitle of his work from time to time clearly shows, on the one hand, his attempt to express in the best possible manner the difference between the teaching of the Fathers of the Church and the views of the scholastic theologians on the issue of the ancestral sin and, on the other, that he always relies on the New Testament and the Apostolic Fathers up until St Irenaeus, who are the source of his theological thinking.

Thus this first stage of Fr. John Romanides' research effort concerns the writings of Holy Scripture and of the Fathers of the Church in comparison with the writings of Augustine and the scholastic theologians. This research has all the marks of a serious academic researcher, who

is interested at this stage in searching for the 'spirit' of the thinking of the Fathers of the Church and, in my opinion, in showing that the Orthodox Church is the 'historical Church', which has preserved the apostolic tradition, as this passed authoritatively from the Apostles to the later Fathers through the Apostolic Fathers. The Latins and Protestants, however, not only misinterpreted this apostolic tradition, but altered it significantly.

After this basic research, Fr. John Romanides investigated the subject of the cosmological and anthropological presuppositions of the ancestral sin in more depth, in order to research the consequences of the Fall of man, which are the darkening of the nous* and the departure of humankind from the Light of God. He also researched further into the way in which man returns to God and acquires communion and participation in Him. That is to say, how he is led from purification to illumination and glorification. In this second phase of his creative work, he was significantly helped by the interpretation of passages from the New Testament, particularly the interpretation of the teaching of the Apostle Paul.

We also see this in the introduction to the second edition of his doctoral thesis on *The Ancestral Sin*, in which he speaks about the foundations of empirical theology, uncreated truth and secular knowledge, and the distinction between essence and energy in God[4].

It is clear from the handwritten exercise book that I have at my disposal, that already from his study of the subject for *The Ancestral Sin*, he had gathered all the New Testament passages referring to the devil, the creative energy of God, man's sin, spiritual death, *"the heart as nous"* and *"the heart as God's dwelling place"*, *"the spirit of life"*, *"the spirit of man"*, *"the righteousness of God"*, *"salvation from death and corruption"*, *"the instinct of self-preservation"*, being crucified with Christ, and so on. As can be seen from studying this collection of

4. John Romanides, *To propatoriko amartima*, ed. cit., pp. κστ΄-λε΄ [xxvi-xxxv]

* **Nous**: the eye of the soul, the purest part of the soul, the highest attention. We use the transliteration of the Greek word because translating it as 'mind' or 'intellect' is misleading. The nous or noetic faculty is not the same as the '*logiki*', the 'reason' or 'rational faculty' of the soul. – Translator's note

passages, particularly those from St Paul, Fr. John Romanides selected all the extracts that refer to the neptic-hesychastic life as a precondition for salvation. This work forms the basis of his thinking as regards showing the neptic-hesychastic tradition to be the life of the Prophets, Apostles and Fathers.

Studying the New Testament through the hesychastic tradition of the Church was a substantial help to him later on in the discussions he had with the Protestants as the representative of the Church of Greece in dialogues with them.

He often told me that the Protestants deny the teaching of the Fathers of the Church. They cannot understand about the person, hypostasis, essence and energy of God, and regard these things as the influence of Greek philosophy, which altered the apostolic tradition. In fact, he told me that the great Protestant theologian Harnack supported the view that Orthodoxy is an idolatrous form of Christianity. So when the Protestants in the dialogues heard the Orthodox theologians using terms derived from Greek philosophy, they were indignant. They did not understand and rejected all this teaching. It was not, therefore, easy for an Orthodox theologian to speak to the Protestants using the terminology of patristic theology, as they did not understand it.

This caused Fr. John Romanides to make constant use of passages from the New Testament, especially passages from the Apostle Paul, in the dialogues that he had with the Protestants about Orthodox views. In this way he put them in a difficult position. Similarly, in discussion with Jews, he expounded passages from the Old Testament about the revelation of the unincarnate Word, the Angel of Great Counsel, Yahweh, bearing in mind the patristic tradition. This came as a surprise to them.

When Fr. John Romanides used and interpreted passages from St Paul, he did not interpret them in an arbitrary way, but took into account the teaching of the Apostolic Fathers and the great Fathers of the Church, although he did not usually refer to specific patristic passages. He was familiar with the 'spirit' of the holy Fathers, but made more use of extracts from the holy Apostles. As a consequence, he also used the terminology of the Apostles on issues of the spiritual life, such as the heart, the nous, glorification, perfection and so on.

As I knew him personally, read his writings and, above all, because I was initiated into his spoken words, I consider that he did not interpret

the New Testament, particularly the Apostle Paul, arbitrarily, but on the basis of two important interpretative keys, two essential traditions.

The first tradition-interpretative key was the teaching of St Symeon the New Theologian, with which he was very familiar. He had studied all his teaching from original texts and had correlated it with the teaching of St Paul. I have made a thorough study of – and indexed – all the works of St Symeon the New Theologian, and I have ascertained this connection between him and the teaching of Fr. John. He often stated it openly, but sometimes this connection was simply self-evident. One day I shall attempt the task of linking Fr. John Romanides' commentary on passages from the Epistles with the teaching of St Symeon the New Theologian.

The second tradition-interpretative key, which he used to study the Epistles of the Apostle Paul, was the living tradition that he encountered among the hesychast Fathers on the Holy Mountain and elsewhere, with whom he discussed the subject of purification of the heart, illumination of the nous for noetic prayer, and theoria, which is the vision of the uncreated Light. Also, *The Way of a Pilgrim*, the writings of St Silouan the Athonite and, without a doubt, the writings of the Fathers of the *Philokalia* made an impression on him.

The neptic-hesychastic teaching of Fr. John Romanides is therefore inseparably linked with the teaching of the Apostle Paul and St Symeon the New Theologian, and with the experience of contemporary hesychasts with whom he was directly or indirectly acquainted. In my opinion, his own personal experience ought to be included with these factors, but I do not know what stage he had reached. I do not think someone can insist on certain issues unless he has personal experience. An experienced spiritual father of blessed memory told me that Fr. John's insistence on certain matters made an impression on him, so he too paid attention to those points.

To these factors we should also add the teaching of St Dionysios the Areopagite, which he distinguished from the Neoplatonic tradition with powerful arguments; the teaching of St Gregory Palamas, on which he was a researcher and an expert, and which he regarded as the quintessence of the hesychastic tradition of the Church; and the teaching of the Cappadocian Fathers, of whom he was proud, being also of Cappadocian descent.

His insistence on the neptic-hesychastic tradition is connected with the fact that this is the life of the Prophets, Apostles and saints, as found in Holy Scripture and the whole ecclesiastical tradition (the sacred Canons, the *Prayer Book*, hymnography, patristic texts, the *Philokalia*) and as was clearly manifested in the discussion that took place initially between St Gregory Palamas and Barlaam, and subsequently between St Gregory Palamas and Akindynos and Gregoras.

Fr. John accorded great significance and weight to the neptic tradition because, apart from the dogmas, it is there that the difference lies between the Orthodox tradition and the tradition of the Franco-Latins and the Protestants. He actually located this difference in the terms *analogia entis* (analogy of being) and *analogia fidei* (analogy of faith), which refer to different means of experiencing the revelation of God.

The *analogia entis* refers to the existence of an analogy between what is uncreated and what is created, that God created the world from archetypal forms, and man's salvation consists in the return of his soul to the uncreated world of ideas. This is classical metaphysics, which influenced Franco-Latin theology. According to this theory, someone can know the essence of God, if he knows the essence of created things, by means of human reason (*logiki*). Barlaam expressed this tradition, which is why St Gregory Palamas reacted against this so-called "speculative analogy".

The *analogia fidei* refers to man's relationship with God through faith, as it is revealed in Holy Scripture. This tradition says that the revelation of God was given in words. It is not known through philosophy, but through Holy Scripture, which is the word of God. By studying Holy Scripture, one comes to know God and comes into contact with Him, because the revelation of God has been deposited in Holy Scripture, which is the word of God.

Fr. John Romanides asserted that both these traditions (*analogia entis* and *analogia fidei*) are characteristic of Western Christianity and alien to the teaching of the Fathers of the Church. The Orthodox Church teaches that knowledge of God is gained by participating in God's uncreated purifying, illuminating and glorifying energy, which is experienced within the Church through the Mysteries (Sacraments) and asceticism. When someone who is glorified attains to the vision of the glory of God he encounters neither archetypal forms nor words, but

participates in the uncreated Light and clearly discerns the difference between what is uncreated and what is created.

Asceticism is the neptic-hesychastic tradition, which is the precondition for the dogmas and the way leading to man's encounter with God. Thus knowledge of God is not associated with philosophy, nor simply with reading Holy Scripture, although Holy Scripture is important, because it records the experience of glorification. Knowledge of God is connected with experiencing the neptic-hesychastic tradition and the vision of the glory of God.

Fr. John described this neptic tradition as therapeutic treatment, *therapeia*, a term we meet in all the biblical and patristic tradition. Through purification and illumination man reaches glorification, that is to say, he attains to communion with God through curative treatment. It is characteristic that St Gregory Palamas presents the All-Holy Virgin as the model hesychast. She lived in the Holy of Holies and used as her method "the guidance of stillness [hesychia]". As St Gregory Palamas writes, when someone arrives at the vision of God, this is "the only proof of a soul in good health." Thus, "Contemplation [theoria] is the fruit of a healthy soul, as an outcome of glorification and its beauty." So man is not glorified "by speculative analogies on the basis of skilful reasoning and observations" but under the guidance of hesychia, by which he is cured[5].

One of the significant texts that belong to this phase of Fr. John Romanides' theological work is the very important talk that he gave to the 'Orthodox Council', during the meeting of the World Council of Churches convened in Damascus from 5th to 9th February 1982, on the subject *Jesus Christ - The Life of the World*[6].

This ecclesiastical tradition was the basis of the theology of Fr. John Romanides and was the practical outcome of his theological research into the ancestral sin. He used to assert that, if someone did not have a thorough understanding of how the *analogia entis* and *analogia fidei* diverge from the theology of the Prophets, Apostles and Fathers, he

5. Cf. St Gregory Palamas, Homily 53 in *The Homilies,* edited & translated by Christopher Veniamin, Mount Thabor Publishing, Waymart USA 2009, p. 438

6. Xenia Oecumenica, no. 39, Helsinki 1983, pp. 232-275

would be unable to grasp the heresies of Western Christianity or the value of the neptic-hesychastic tradition of the Orthodox Church.

The two stages of his theological development (*The Ancestral Sin* and the neptic tradition of the Church) are not mutually independent, but are very closely interconnected, as the second is a continuation of the first. Some people claim that Fr. John began as an exceptionally promising theologian with a significant contribution to make to theology, but subsequently he lost his way and did not assist in theological regeneration here in Greece. I think that those who interpret Fr. John in this way do him an injustice, as do those who allege he was influenced either by Protestants or Origenists.

Fr. John was an intelligent man with an investigative spirit. He was steadfast in the Orthodox tradition and expressed the authentic experience of the Church. Of course he was familiar with all the theological currents of his time and spoke with authority. It is not possible, however, to ascribe certain verbal expressions of his to influence from other trends. In any case, St Basil the Great and St Gregory the Theologian studied Origen, made a collection of some extracts from his writings and composed the so-called *Philokalia* (not the anthology of that name compiled later by St Makarios Notaras and St Nicodemos of the Holy Mountain) without being regarded as Origenists.

As a human being even Fr. John will have made some mistakes in his life, including some in the expression and interpretation of his theology. But he was a great theologian and teacher, who assisted greatly in the regeneration of the hesychastic tradition in our day. He cannot be ignored and misinterpreted by those who use some of his phrases selectively, without understanding them and without comprehending the overall 'spirit' of his teaching.

Finally, anyone wishing to look at the teaching of Fr. John Romanides ought to focus on these two phases of his teaching, namely, his book *The Ancestral Sin*, which is based on the Apostles and the Apostolic Fathers, but also everything he wrote and said about the neptic-hesychastic tradition, which he interpreted through the teaching of St Paul's Epistles and of the Cappadocian Fathers, always in relation to the teaching of St Symeon the New Theologian, St Gregory Palamas and the hesychastic Fathers whom he himself knew.

2. History and Theology

In all his writings and spoken teaching, Fr. John Romanides linked theology very closely with history. In his view, if someone was going to interpret the formulation of Orthodox theology in various eras, or even the deviations of heretics from the Orthodox revelational message, he ought to look at the historical environment in which the Church lived and the holy Fathers worked. Apart from anywhere else, we see this in the introduction to the second edition of his doctoral thesis on *The Ancestral Sin*, where he refers to the political and theological context in which the non-Orthodox planned and attempted their interventions to abolish Romanity and westernise Orthodoxy[7].

On the connection between theology and history he agreed with Fr. Georges Florovsky, whom he had known in America and whom he respected for his contribution to theological literature. In fact, I can add that he went beyond the theological thought of Fr. Georges Florovsky. I shall refer briefly to this subject.

All those who are involved in theological matters know that Fr. Georges Florovsky (1893-1979) is regarded as one of the greatest Orthodox theologians of the 20th century. He was a very important presence in theological literature. He was born and brought up in Odessa in Ukraine (Little Russia) and after an eventful journey he became a professor at the Orthodox Theological Institute of St Sergius in Paris. Subsequently he worked in America, where he taught as professor (and Dean) at St Vladimir's Theological Seminary; as professor at the Holy Cross School of Theology, Boston; at the University of Harvard, and at other universities. He was also a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Anyone studying the writing of this great theologian detects two basic points of his theological thinking that concern us here.

The first point is the importance that Fr. Georges attributes to history. We observe in his writings that he relies on historical knowledge. That is why he makes steady progress and his theological thinking is well-balanced. The fact is that Christ was incarnate in time and place,

7. John Romanides, op. cit, p. ιε΄ [xv]ff.

in history. He assumed the human body and glorified it. The Church, too, works within history, attempting to transform it and to lead each human being to glorification.

In his article entitled *The Ways of Russian Theology*, Fr. Georges Florovsky writes: "Theological consciousness must become historical. Only on account of its historicity can it possibly be catholic. Indifference for history always leads to a sectarian dryness, to a doctrinaire attitude. Historical sensitivity is indispensable to the theologian, it is the necessary condition for being in the Church. Whoever is insensitive to history would hardly be a good Christian."[8]

Elucidating his thought he writes, "Christianity is whole in history, it concerns history. It is not a revelation to history, but rather an appeal to history, to *historical action and creation*. Everything in the Church is dynamic, everything is in action and in motion since Pentecost until the Great Day."[9] "The Church recognizes and proclaims dogmatic events as facts of history." Therefore, "the task of a theologian in the Church is to work in the element of history. For 'ecclesiality' is tradition."[10]

Relying on this basis, he considers that "Hellenism, so to speak, assumed a perpetual character in the Church; it has incorporated itself in the very fabric of the Church as the *eternal category* of Christian existence." This came about through the Greek-speaking Fathers of the Church, who expressed the revelational message in Greek terms. Thus no one can deny the tradition as it has been defined through the ages, because that would be to disembody the Church. This is the reason why Fr. Georges asks whether anyone could be "foolish enough" to attempt "to deliberately 'de-hellenize' the services and transpose them into a more 'modern' style." Thus, "Whenever a theologian begins to think that the 'Greek categories' are outmoded, this simply means that he has stepped out of the rhythm of communion. Theology cannot possibly be catholic except within Hellenism." As the Gospels and Christian theology "once and for all, were expressed from the start in Hellenistic

8. Georges Florovsky, *Aspects of Church History,* Collected Works, Vol. 4, Nordland Publishing Company, Belmont, Massachusetts 1975, p. 193 [italics, capitals and spelling as in original book]
9. Ibid. p. 194
10. Ibid.

categories," this means that, "Patristic tradition and catholicity, historicity and Hellenism are the joint aspects of one unique and indivisible fact."[11]

Bearing in mind cases of Protestants and certain Orthodox Christians who were attempting to de-hellenise Christianity in order to return simply to the biblical tradition, he sees this as self-delusion, because, "It aimed at emptying Christian doctrine of all its historical elements, in order to return to a purely 'Biblical' foundation". Such a method has as its result "that the whole of Christianity disintegrates into humanitarian morals, in effect a travesty; such a return to the Bible is an illusion"[12]. It is unacceptable from an Orthodox point of view to concentrate our attention on the "language of the Bible" and to deny the later ecclesiastical-patristic Tradition.

The second point of Fr. Georges Florovsky's theological thinking is that, apart from faith in the dogmas of the Church, we should sense the inner rhythm of the heart of the Church. In an article with the title *Western Influences in Russian Theology* he examines how Russian theology was influenced by the Western Enlightenment and German Idealism, and thus found itself at odds with the Orthodox tradition and the piety of the people. He discusses German philosophy, which infiltrated Russian theological consciousness, and the "new theological *scholarship*" which entered Russia from the West.

Speaking of academic theology in Russia in the past, which was influenced by German Idealism, he writes that it used "a special language, foreign to the people, a language which was neither that of common life nor of prayer. It remained an alien body in the structure of the Church, developing into artificial and totally estranged forms." In very apt terms he writes that, "Theological thought gradually digressed from hearing the rhythm of the Church's heart and thereby lost the 'way' to this heart." In order to characterise this theology, he borrows a phrase from another critic, that this sort of anti-traditional theology is a "wandering theology."[13]

Of course, this sort of theology, which was introduced into Russia

11. Ibid. pp. 195-96
12. Ibid. p. 196
13. Ibid. p. 178

from the West, provoked reactions from other professors in theological schools, who saw the theology of the Church through their own tradition and not through Western criteria. He recalls the thinking of a professor of the Theological Academy of St Petersburg, Aleksei Vvedenskii, according to whom one should first of all "establish the positive witness of the Church from Scripture and Tradition" and then "dogma comes alive and discloses itself in its entire speculative depth – as a divine answer to human questions, as a divine Amen and as a witness of the Church." Referring once more to the thought of Aleksei Vvedenskii, he writes that, "Dogmatic theology, when it confronts the questions of the present, must constantly re-create dogmas afresh so that the dark coals of traditional formulas are transformed into the illuminating jewels of true faith." Fr. Georges notes that in this case "the philosophical and historical methods go hand in hand. The historical method, for its part, leads back to the speculative confession of the faith of the Holy Fathers."[14]

Obviously, when we see the dogmas in a historical, but also a theological, perspective, we can understand their value and interpret the teaching of the holy Fathers. It is therefore insufficient to study the dogmas of the Church and translate them into contemporary language. We have to live the experience of the holy Fathers. Fr. Georges Florovsky observes, "What is wanted, is not to translate the old dogmatic formulas into a modern language, but, on the contrary, to return creatively to the 'ancient' experience, to re-live it in the depth of our being, and to incorporate our thought in the continuous fabric of ecclesial fullness. All those tentative transpositions or translations have never been anything else but betrayals, that is to say, new interpretations in terms thoroughly *inappropriate*."[15]

These two viewpoints of Fr. Georges Florovsky have been quoted in order to identify their affinity with corresponding opinions of Fr. John Romanides, which we shall encounter as we read the chapters that follow. Fr. John Romanides moved within the same framework, and I should emphasise that he developed these views even further.

Fr. John Romanides became acquainted with Fr. Georges Florovsky

14. Ibid. p. 176
15. Ibid. p. 197

at Columbia University and at St Vladimir's Theological Seminary, where he attended classes while Fr. Georges Florovsky was professor and Dean. Later he had Fr. Georges Florovsky as his professor at Harvard, when he was preparing his thesis. Unpublished correspondence between them survives from this period. In one of his letters to Fr. Georges Florovsky (8th August 1957) he writes:

> "I feel that I still need a few more years of quite [sic] research. I've been working for 4 years on ancient theology and have not done enough work in other fields. I am thinking seriously of applying for admission to the Department of History and Philosophy of Religion at Harvard and working with you for another two years. You were mostly responsible for getting me to think in an Orthodox manner and I feel that I would be greatly benefited under your directions for a few more years."

It is clear from this letter that Fr. Georges Florovsky had a significant influence on the theological direction that Fr. John Romanides took, and that after his doctoral thesis at the Theological School in Athens, he worked under the guidance of Fr. Georges Florovsky at Harvard. We also see this in another letter that he sent him later on (14th April 1966), in which he writes:

> "I am finishing my Harvard dissertation, but I am not planning on submitting it for any degree. I will go ahead and publish it as soon as possible with proper acknowledgements to you as advisor. It is important that I pursue my career with the sufficiency of my Orthodox doctorate. The imbiciles [sic] at Holy Cross and elsewhere must learn that one does not need an anglo-saxon [sic] doctorate to be an Orthodox theologian."

I do not know to which of his works he is referring and if it has been published or remains unpublished. From this letter, however, it appears that at Harvard he had Fr. Georges Florovsky as his mentor and professor. His Orthodox mentality is also very marked, as he does not want to rely on the titles bestowed by this great university, but is content with the doctorate bestowed by the Orthodox Theological School of Athens.

His relationship with Fr. Georges Florovsky was, therefore, impor-

tant. He said of Fr. Georges in one of his spoken addresses: "He was my professor in America for many years and we lived in the same apartment building." Subsequently they taught together at the Holy Cross School of Theology, Boston. In fact, when Fr. Georges Florovsky was dismissed from his professorial post, Fr. John Romanides, along with others, resigned in protest at the insult offered to this great theologian.

From his years as a student and later, when he was working on his thesis, *The Ancestral Sin*, Fr. John Romanides was involved with history, but also with the theology of the Apostolic Fathers. Later, however, he developed these issues even further. He identified the major alteration to Orthodox theology made by the Franks*, both by introducing the scholastic method and by marginalising the Orthodox neptic tradition.

This is the reason why Fr. John linked history very closely with theology in all his writings and in his spoken addresses. This was the perspective in which he spoke about the theology of the Roman Fathers of the Church, which he distinguished from the theology of the Franco-Latin theologians.

Undeniably, Fr. John went further than Fr. Georges Florovsky by referring to Greek-speaking and Latin-speaking Roman Fathers of the Church and to Franco-Latin theologians. Also, he did not see the dogmas on a theoretical and philosophical basis but in the light of the experience of the Church. He associated dogmas "with the rhythms of the Church's heart". He interpreted the entire dogmatic theology of the Church on the basis of the hesychastic-philokalic tradition and on the basis of the hesychast Fathers whom he met in the course of his life. This is why his theological thinking was solid, because it was founded on his competent historical knowledge. But it was also authoritative, since it relied on the experience of the glorified saints.

Some people attempt to identify Protestant or Origenistic influences in the teaching of Fr. John Romanides about noetic prayer, purification,

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* **Franks**: Fr. Romanides frequently uses the terms 'Franks' and 'Frankish' not to refer to an ethnic group but to denote Christians who follow the 'Frankish' scholastic theological tradition, in contrast to what he regards as the 'Roman' Orthodox patristic tradition. He also uses the term 'Latins' in the same sense as 'Franks'. – Translator's note

illumination and glorification. I think they are mistaken and misinterpret Fr. John's theology, which is the theology of the Church, as we encounter it in the Fathers of the Church and in the services. Such criticism originates from the Protestants, who have rejected monasticism and the whole way of life that governs it, and have attributed it to Neoplatonic influences, as Fr. John himself states. This is discussed in the chapter of this volume on the stages of spiritual perfection (purification, illumination and glorification). If, however, these circles continue to hold such views, they ought actually to erase from ecclesiastical history many Fathers of the Church in whose writings the hesychastic and philokalic tradition is to be found, and to reject the corresponding hymns from Orthodox services.

Throughout the centuries, however, the Church, in different discussions and controversies at various times, has reached secure conclusions. It has rejected the views of various theologians on theological, Christological, anthropological, soteriological and eschatological issues, and kept whatever good has been expressed, mainly on the means and method by which man acquires knowledge of God. Thus, it is entirely unjust and foolish to bring back discussions about differences between 'Anthropomorphites' and 'Origenists', as the Church, through the great holy Fathers, including St Maximos the Confessor, St John of Damascus, St Symeon the New Theologian, St Gregory Palamas and all the philokalic Fathers, has authoritatively defined the revelatory truth.

We know for sure from the tradition of the Fathers and the Councils that God's image and likeness refer to man's whole being, and that through the Fall we lost God's likeness, but not His image, which became darkened. The knowledge of God is now acquired through purification, illumination and glorification. We also know that the Son and Word of God was incarnate and glorified the human nature that He assumed from the All-Holy Virgin. Within the Church, therefore, human beings are sanctified through the Mysteries and asceticism. The whole human being (soul and body) is glorified by being united with Christ, and through Him has communion with the Father and the Holy Spirit. We also believe that the bodies of human beings will be resurrected, and those who are resurrected will see God as light (Paradise) or as darkness (Hell).

This also happened with regard to the neptic-hesychastic tradition, which refers to the return of the nous to the heart, the purification of the heart, the illumination of the nous, noetic prayer and man's glorification. This tradition was upheld by the Councils in the 14th century, so whenever anyone dares to characterise the neptic tradition as Origenism, he is endangering his standing in the Church and his very salvation.

The teaching of Fr. John Romanides is in accord on these two points - history and empirical theology - with that of Fr. Georges Florovsky. More generally, it agrees with the teaching of the great Fathers of the Church, whom we mentioned above. His dogmatic teaching is empirical and does not rely on a metaphysical framework, but on purely theological and historical data. In this perspective, dogmas that some people present as "dark coals" can be offered as "illuminating jewels of true faith."

3. The Contribution of Fr. John Romanides

A great teacher can only be interpreted by a great pupil or reader, and not by superficial people who unconsciously express certain other mentalities that are characteristic of them.

I think that the testimony and confession of Fr. George Metallinos, a leading theologian of our time, a brilliant and gifted man and tireless researcher, is very significant. He says that in 1973, as a postgraduate student in Cologne in what was then West Germany, when a duplicated copy of Fr. John Romanides' *Dogmatic Theology* fell into his hands for the first time, he regarded it "as a gift of God's grace". He writes, "I immediately put aside all the German - Papal and Protestant - reference books and systematic theological words (I had spent enough time on them!) and began voraciously reading the truly patristic *Dogmatic Theology* of the Greek American priest-professor, whom I did not yet have the blessing of knowing". Further on he writes that, after reading this book, "I realised that Fr. John Romanides, who was then unknown to me, had become my most effective teacher on dogmatic theology, but also on ecclesiastical history...to the point that I can say that I feel I am his pupil and I am particularly pleased when I am 'accused'

of being perceptibly influenced by him."[16] In his funeral oration for Fr. John Romanides, Fr. George Metallinos declares, "Considering his theological work in teaching, writing and controversy, we are forced by the facts to speak of an epoch before and after him. This is because he brought a real severance and break from our scholastic past, which had acted as a Babylonian captivity of our theology."[17]

As I mentioned already, Fr. George Metallinos is a leading teacher of theology, a researcher and academic of high standing, a priest with Orthodox criteria and, most important of all, a genuine and authentic human being without inner complexes. For that reason he is not envious, but recognises the work of pioneering figures in theology, Fr. John among them. Thus his confession and testimony, in my opinion, is significant and carries weight. Consequently it cannot be ignored.

At this point I should mention the very significant thesis of Andrew Sopko entitled *Prophet of Roman Orthodoxy, The Theology of John Romanides*[18]. Specific chapters present Fr. John Romanides' complete teaching: *Orthodox Tradition and its Captivity*, *A Debate about God*, *Theocentric Anthropology*, *The Unity of the Old and New Testaments*, *Roman Orthodoxy*, *Towards the Future*, *Romanides and Contemporary Orthodox Theology.*

The Church is the Body of Christ. As every body retains the nourishment that it needs to feed its members and rejects the rest, so the Church, as a theanthropic Body, preserves authentic teaching and rejects all poisonous and indigestible foodstuffs, which depend on speculation and 'theological' fantasy. I believe that the Church will keep the essence of the teaching of Fr. John Romanides, precisely because it is in accord with the apostolic and patristic tradition and is the 'spirit' of Orthodox teaching at its most profound, which leads man to glorification and salvation. Fr. John Romanides' teaching is not *"cunningly devised fables"* (2 Pet. 1:16), but the path that leads to Mount Tabor and

16. Fr. George Metallinos, *Protopresviteros Ioannis S. Romanidis*, Armos publications, Athens 2003, pp. 9-11 - in Greek

17. Ibid. p. 59

18. Andrew J. Sopko, *Prophet of Roman Orthodoxy - The Theology of John Romanides*, Synaxis Press, Dewdney BC, Canada 1998

the experience of the revelation of Christ. For that reason it is authentic and puts man's soul at ease.

I hope that the teaching of Fr. John Romanides, the great theologian of our time, which is set out in this volume, will be sufficiently understood, because it agrees with the teaching of the Church, as expressed by the God-bearing Fathers and guaranteed by the Councils.

†The Metropolitan of Nafpaktos Hierotheos

Note by the Author

Fr. John Romanides made a thorough study of Western theology, which has been influenced by scholastic and Protestant theology. He also knew Orthodox theology very well, as it has been formulated by the Prophets, Apostles and Fathers. In particular, for the Orthodox Church's theology on hesychasm and the vision of God, Fr. John Romanides relied on the teaching of St Gregory Palamas, which was upheld by the Council of 1351. For this reason he uses a special terminology with regard to the experience of *theosis* and the *vasileia* (glory, rule, kingdom) of God. This terminology corresponds to the 'spirit' of the teaching of the Fathers of the Church.

In this book, which has been translated from Greek, it has been considered right, out of respect for Fr. John Romanides, to use his own terminology, as the book contains extensive quotations from his spoken words. An additional reason why the terminology of Fr. John Romanides is used in this book is that there are published writings of his with this specific vocabulary in books and periodicals, as well as on the internet. If the usual vocabulary that prevails in the English-speaking world were to be used in this book, it would conflict with the writings of Fr. John Romanides in circulation.

This note mainly concerns three terms:

1. The term *'theosis'*

Theosis is a patristic term. It was used by the Fathers of the Church to convey the scriptural terms 'justification', 'sanctification', 'perfection' and 'glorification'. It derives from the Greek word *Theos*, 'God'. The human being who to various degrees participates in the uncreated grace of God is referred to as *theoumenos*. This is a gift from God to man, who acquires participation in God.

In order better to convey the meaning of the term *theosis*, Fr. John

Romanides prefers the scriptural term 'glorification' (participation in the glory of God).

In this book, therefore, for the term *theosis* and its derivatives (e.g. *theoumenos*) the term 'glorification' will be used instead of the term 'deification', which for the most part prevails in the English-speaking world, and 'glorified' will be used instead of 'deified'.

2. The term '*vasileia* (glory, rule, kingdom) of God'

The term '*vasileia* (glory, rule, kingdom) of God', according to the patristic tradition and especially the teaching of St Gregory Palamas, means the uncreated Light of God.

Christ said to His Disciples: *"Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom* [*vasileia* in Greek] *of God present with power"* (Mark 9:1). St Gregory Palamas explains that His Transfiguration on Mount Tabor followed immediately after these words. Thus seeing the *vasileia* of God is the theoria (vision) of the uncreated Light on Mount Tabor during the Transfiguration of Christ. It follows that participation in the uncreated Light is participation in the *vasileia* of God, which comes *"with power"*, through the energy of the Holy Spirit.

In the light of this teaching, in order better to convey this reality and to distinguish it from created reality, Fr. John Romanides uses the phrase 'the glory and rule (*vasileia*)', instead of the term 'kingdom', which prevails in the English-speaking world.

In this book, instead of the customary term 'kingdom', the phrase 'the glory and rule (*vasileia*)' will be used.

3. The term '*Papikos*'

Fr. John Romanides uses the term 'Papal' (*Papikos*) instead of the usual expression 'Roman Catholic'. In accordance with the general principle that we should respect his terminology, we follow this usage.

I think that we should respect the views of this great theologian and generally his terminology, which he adopted after much study. The reader of this book should take the above points into consideration in order to understand the words of Fr. John Romanides.

In Vancouver, Canada, 1995

Part 1

Theology of the Holy Trinity

Theology of the Holy Trinity

The subject of God has concerned human beings in all eras from both the philosophical and theological point of view. All the different philosophical and religious systems attempt to answer such questions as 'What is God?', 'Since when does He exist?', 'Who made Him?', 'What is His relationship with the world?' and so on.

In the Orthodox Church we teach that God was revealed to the Prophets, Apostles, Fathers and saints, and they have true knowledge of God. They are the real theologians in the Church. Those who theologise are those whose nous is illumined and who follow the teaching of the experienced. We rely on their testimony, because God is not something discovered by powerful human reasoning, but the Person Who reveals Himself to the pure heart of man, according to the Beatitude: *"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God"* (Matt. 5:8).

We shall set out the experience of the God-seeing saints in the following chapter.

1. Dogma and Mystery of the Holy Trinity

The experience of the Triune God was formulated by the Fathers of the Ecumenical Councils in the terminology of that era, to enable the faith to be defined and to prevent its distortion. In spite of the definition of the faith, the Holy Trinity as regards Its essence is a mystery incomprehensible to human beings and angels.

a) The Existence of God

God exists before all ages and before the creation of the world. It would have been possible for God not to have created the world, without that having consequences for His existence. The existence of God does not depend on the world, human beings and their wishes.

The Church proclaims the existence of God, because it relies on the revelation of Christ and the divine vision of the Prophets of the Old Testament and the Apostles and Fathers of the New Testament. This is a matter of empirical faith not a speculative declaration.

> The God Who exists is He Who is known by the experience of glorification*. When a saint reaches glorification and tastes God in his experience, this God of experience exists: the empirical God. The other gods of the others are not gods. The other gods do not exist. This God exists. So when the Fathers speak about God, they are talking about something very, very specific. They never speak abstractly about God."

During the experience, those who behold God see "a divinity of threefold Light". The two Lights have the first Light as their source. The second originates from the first, but has a body and the third proceeds from the first, but does not have a body.

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* **glorification** = *theosis*. See 'Note by the Author' p. 37 - Translator's note

"The glorified see the Word identical in all respects to the Father. 'Light from Light; true God from true God.' The Prophets saw Him. They saw Light from Light. Light-Light, one like the other in every way, and one from the essence of the other, which means that one had the other as its source and is from the other, not from nothing.

How do we know these things? From Greek philosophy or from the experience of glorification? Definitely from the experience of glorification"

The glorified know from their personal experience that these three Lights are not independent of each other. They are "a divinity of three-fold Light in one divinity or in one Light".

"That is to say, one Light, which is three Lights. But these Lights are not three separate Lights. The glorified see the archetypal Light in one Light, by means of the other Light. This was the basis of their experience." In other words, "in the Light (of the Holy Spirit) through the Light (of Christ) we see the source of Light (the Father)."

"The experience of glorification is something different (in contrast with philosophical speculation), which someone has before him and lives within the mystery of the Holy Trinity. He knows that the glory is uncreated, that the energies are uncreated. He does not see the essence. Within the glory He discerns the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Of course God is not these names. He sees Light, Light, Light. Light from Light, Light incarnate, Light not incarnate, which Light is from the first Light.

So the two Lights are from the first Light. The one Light has taken flesh, the other is not incarnate. This is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The fact that one Light is incarnate and the other two Lights are not incarnate means that this distinction exists between the three Lights. This needs to be formulated and expressed in some way, so that the catechumen, who has no experience of glorification, knows about this matter."

The God of the Orthodox Church is the God of the revelation. The God of scholastic theology, however, is a means of satisfying human beings' pursuit of happiness. Thus the fulfilment of this eudemonism is regarded as the proof of the existence of God.

"The God of scholastic theology is a projection of man's need for happiness. I am not sure if you can follow me. God is the means of making people happy. So in order for man to satisfy his desires, God exists. The existence of God is dependent on man's desires.

Let me give you a brief analysis. If you take Thomas Aquinas you will see there that one proof that God exists is the fact that, if God did not exist, man's desires for happiness would not be satisfied. So this is a proof of the existence of God. He says that man has a natural tendency towards happiness. Consequently, as man by nature has a tendency towards happiness, happiness must exist. Because human beings naturally pursue happiness, happiness exists. This is a basic argument regarding the existence of God."

According to the Fathers of the Church, the only proof of the existence of God is not eudemonism but, as mentioned earlier, His revelation to the saints in His glory and man's participation in the vision of the glory of God through glorification. The glorified Prophets, Apostles and saints who behold God have confirmed this to us down through the centuries.

In the West the existence of God was connected with the faculty of human reason (*logiki*), which they did not regard as something material, as animals do not have reason and cannot think like human beings. Scholastic theology developed in the West on this assumption. It was based on reason, specifically on rationalism. Because sound reasoning is not the same thing as rationalism: reason is one thing but being controlled by reason is another.

"In the West the proofs for the existence of God were connected with man's ability to know things that are not material. These intangible things are ideas."

"The Franks, following Augustine, and later Aristotle and Plato, believed that reason is a spiritual, not a material, function, and reached the conclusion that this proves that the soul, as it is non-material and non-composite, is immortal. This naturally leads to the belief that there is a supreme Being, a supreme intelligence. Man's reason cannot exist alone, because the world itself ought to be directed by a great intelligence in order for man's intelligence to exist. From here one moves on naturally to the existence of a great intel-

ligence, the world soul, which can be one god or two gods, higher and lower, as we encounter in systems of idolatry."

In the Fathers of the Church, however, the knowledge of the existence of God was not linked with the reason (rational faculty, *logiki)*, but with the pure nous, which is called the heart. Christ's Beatitude is well-known: *"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God"* (Matt. 5:8). The glorified, who have been purified, were taught, and experienced, the true way of knowing God.

"The Fathers stress that the reason can only know material phenomena. Reason can only know created things; it cannot know anything uncreated. This is a fundamental dogma of the Fathers of the Church. There is no similarity between the world and God. As reason only knows created things, it cannot know what is uncreated. Human knowledge is therefore limited.

Man on his own cannot know God. Because of that, the only bridge between created and uncreated things for Orthodoxy is the glorified. The question arises of whether the idea exists in Christianity that man has the natural ability to know what is uncreated. This is completely unacceptable for the Fathers of the Church: man does not have the natural ability to know God. Therefore, as there is no similarity at all between God and the world, between created and uncreated, we need to know what the bridge is. There has to be an epistemological bridge. And the only bridge is the glorified."

The human soul has the noetic faculty (energy), the nous, which is the appropriate organ for knowing God, once it has been illuminated and transformed by God's energy.

b) Knowledge of God - Theology

Since God is revealed to glorified man and he participates in His glory, this means that the knowledge of God is spiritual: it is knowledge of the heart, not knowledge of the rational faculty (*logiki*). It is knowledge associated with man's glorification, and in reality it is knowledge beyond human knowledge. Knowledge of God is acquired by the nous and the heart. The reason is incapable of acquiring knowledge of God: it simply formulates it according to its ability.

God belongs to eternity, the saints and angels to the age without end, and man to time. Man living in the world cannot conceive everything that happens in time. He has some slight knowledge of the age without end, in which the angels and saints live, and only after revelation. In this case, God only reveals as much as someone can bear.

This is the reason why the knowledge of God is not speculative – that is to say, scholastic – and the Church prepares people appropriately through purification and illumination of the nous to acquire some knowledge of God.

> "However, this catechism of the Church is not speculative and the Church does not produce people who sit and try to conceive God, because God is inconceivable. This means that the Church prepares man. It takes him as far as illumination and there, at the stage of illumination, there are the concepts of illumination. He knows what these concepts signify. Someone at the stage of illumination knows the relationship between the concept and reality."

The Fathers know that using terminology about God does not also imply knowledge of God, as actual knowledge of God is acquired in the experience of the glory of God. 'Negative' theology is described in this way not because it is abstract or imaginary knowledge, but because it transcends human knowledge, which is centred on reason.

> "Knowledge exists. Here knowledge is what we nowadays call theology. This means, as the Fathers say, that glorification is knowledge of God that is beyond knowledge. This is why man knows God without knowing, and so on. These things do not belong to St Dionysios the Areopagite or to St Gregory the Theologian or to so-called negative theology. Here you have negative theology! The foundations of negative theology are obvious in Holy Scripture."

God reveals Himself to man and man acquires knowledge of God by God's own power. Therefore man "does not have the natural ability to know what is uncreated," to know God. This knowledge is God's gift.

Patristic epistemology differs from any kind of anthropocentric epistemology. In fact, in the patristic tradition a distinction is made between knowledge of God through the experience of revelation and knowledge **about** God through the faith that comes by hearing.

"Only someone who is glorified can have knowledge of God. He knows God empirically and directly. The experience of the glorified is the foundation of the Orthodox faith in God. He who is glorified knows God directly. Subsequently he passes on to us things about God, so we know about God from him. So the Prophets, Apostles and saints of the Church are our own authority concerning God. We have faith in God through these people. We cannot have direct experience of God, unless we have reached the stage of illumination and glorification in our spiritual life."

The glorified who behold God and acquire exact knowledge of God, as far as a human being can, become guides of the faithful, so that they too can arrive at the experience of uncreated reality. This comes about through the nous, not through the faculty of reason.

"The strange thing about the experience of glorification is that in the experience of glorification all concepts about God come to an end, when someone faces the reality of what is uncreated, uncreated reality. Concepts of created things are not done away with, of course, nor concepts of Christ's human nature and so on. The concepts that come to an end are those concerning uncreated things."

The glorified gain authentic knowledge of God and become an authority for us. This knowledge, however, is not natural but spiritual, because it is acquired through glorification, through participation in the uncreated glorifying energy of God. In this state, through the action of God and man's co-operation, the eye is transformed in order to see God, and is called "a self-revealing eye".

"To enable man to know uncreated things, God grants him the experience of glorification and gives him an uncreated, self-revealing eye, so that he can share in the self-revealing Light of God, and through God he sees God. Because of this, there is no knowledge of God without the experience of *theosis*, of glorification. There is faith in God; there is a general faith in God that belongs to all religions, but it is always mistaken. Philosophers may be concerned with God, but they are always deluded. Only when they accept the authority of those who have reached glorification and follow them are they not deceived, because they are following in the footsteps of the glorified.

Who are the glorified? They are the Prophets in the Old Testament, the Apostles in the New Testament and all the Fathers of the Church who have reached glorification. This is the authority of the Church, as well as the Church's theological method."

c) Formulating Experience – Dogma

The God-seers put the experience of the Holy Trinity into words for pastoral and anti-heretical purposes. There is a reason why the Fathers create specific terms to express God.

"I think that the purpose and character of the terminology used in theology – in the language of the Old Testament, the New Testament, in the language of the Fathers and the Councils – ought to be made clear. What is the purpose of the terminology used? The theological terminology of the Orthodox Church is revealed by the fact that the whole of Orthodox theology is based on experience."

The terminology that the Church uses for God is not intended to make God comprehensible, but to deal with various heretics who appear. For that reason the Church itself sometimes changes the terminology.

"This means that the Church is not attached to one specific terminology from one century to the next. It cannot adhere to one permanent terminology about God, because terminologies concerning God are adjusted according to the circumstances in which we use them. When necessary, the Church can add a term that did not previously exist. It can even take a heretical term and use it in an Orthodox way."

The terminology is defined and safeguarded by the glorified, God-seeing Fathers of the Ecumenical Councils. Subsequently it becomes an authoritative part of Orthodox tradition.

The dogma of the Holy Trinity is not philosophical theories, but the product of divine revelation. "For the Fathers of the Church, when we refer to the dogma of the Holy Trinity, we mean the manifestations of God (theophanies)," which are subsequently recorded in dogmatic statements and in sermons. The Epistles of the Apostles are already a

record of divine manifestations. Although the Fathers try to define the revelation concerning the Holy Trinity, the Holy Trinity always remains an ineffable mystery. Thus we make a distinction between the dogma of the Holy Trinity, which is intellectually comprehensible, and the mystery of the Holy Trinity, which is beyond human comprehension.

"In the era before the First Ecumenical Council there was a major effort by the Fathers to reach consensus on matters of terminology. Contemporary researchers are under the impression that the Fathers were seeking to make sense of the dogma of the Holy Trinity, that they were attempting to understand the dogma. And once they understood the dogma, they would express it.

We can neither understand God nor express God. St Gregory the Theologian's words, 'It is impossible to express God and even more impossible to conceive Him,' are the key to everything. The Fathers knew that they could not express God, but nevertheless they strove to find a form of words. Why? Because the Fathers shared the identical experience of illumination and glorification.

All of them, both Eastern and Western, except for Augustine, knew that it was impossible for someone to formulate the mystery of the Holy Trinity. The mystery of the Holy Trinity always transcends understanding. The strange thing is that, when someone reaches glorification in the next life, the mystery of the Holy Trinity will remain a mystery. The mystery of God will never be solved."

The God-seers' experience of the theology of the Triune God is expressed through terms taken from the terminology of their era and with names taken from created things.

"Any names that we have with regard to God, we have these names from created things. We see created things that have power, and we say, as the creation is powerful, God is all-powerful and has total power and more power than created things can have. But the image of power is taken from created things. It is not directly from God.

When someone has the experience of glorification, he realises that God transcends all concepts, even 'power' and 'energy' and 'trinity' and 'monad'. These concepts are the experiences that we have of created things. Those who are glorified and divinely in-

spired use images from everyday human experience to enable them to lead people to God."

Experience is expressed in many terms, as is apparent in the Fathers of the Church, who lived in different eras and different countries.

"Sometimes the inept expression of the experience of the Church in concepts may not be heresy. There may be cases in which this experience has been expressed not only in one terminology, but in two or three terminologies. We may have the problem that one tradition insists on its own terminology and rules out the other terminologies, whereas both terminologies are valid."

The holy Fathers had the Holy Spirit and theologised, so they did not improvise. They were not 'self-ordained theologians'. By contrast, some people theologise on the basis of their speculation and their institutional position, in ignorance of the Tradition of the Church or disregarding it.

"When the Holy Apostles say that *'It seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us,'* (Acts 15:28), how do they know what *'seemed good to the Holy Spirit'*? They know because the Holy Spirit was within them and they had experienced Him. If the bishops today say *'It seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us,'* they are talking nonsense."

The Council of Bishops is Orthodox if there are bishops who are in the state of illumination and glorification. Otherwise it will be Orthodox if it follows the teaching and the experience of the Prophets, Apostles and Fathers.

2. Persons, Essence and Energy

The terminology of the Fathers and the Ecumenical Councils of the Church for the Triune God is conveyed with the terms 'person', 'hypostasis', 'nature', 'essence', 'energy' and 'manner of existence'. Because in the era of the Fathers these terms were originally used by Christians who attempted by means of philosophy to understand the Triune God rationally, the Fathers of the Church included these terms in their terminology after first defining their meaning in an Orthodox way, in accordance with their experience. As the result of a very successful effort, 'person' was identified with 'hypostasis', 'nature' with 'essence', and 'energy' was defined as the active and essential movement of the nature. They also defined the manner of existence of the Persons as the 'unbegottenness' of the Father, the 'begottenness' of the Son and the 'procession' of the Holy Spirit.

What is significant is that from then on these terms are no longer philosophical but are used to formulate the personal experience of the Triune God acquired by the saints through participation in the uncreated energy of the Triune God. These terms are used in the formulation of the dogma of the Triune God, but knowledge of God is empirical, as we shall now see.

a) Triune God in the Old Testament

One view is that the doctrine of the Holy Trinity belongs to the New Testament, not to the Old Testament; that there is monotheism in the Old Testament and God is revealed as Trinity only in the New Testament.

> "Under the influence of Western theologians, many Orthodox do not tolerate any discussion about the Holy Trinity in the Old Testament for two reasons.

One reason is that they are influenced by non-Orthodox, Western commentators. The second is that they are very much influenced by neo-Hellenism, which exalted classical Greek philosophy to the heights, and they attempt to derive genuine Christian teaching not only from Holy Scripture but from the ancient Greek philosophers.

That's why they say nowadays that here in Greece we have a combination of ancient Greece and Christianity, isn't it?"

Of course the incarnate Christ revealed the Father to us and declared to us the coming of the Holy Spirit. On the one hand, one Person never acts independently of the other Persons, because the uncreated energy of the Triune God is shared. And on the other hand, the Old Testament, when it is examined in the light of the New Testament, is Trinitarian.

"The entire form of the revelation in both the Old Testament and the New Testament is purely Trinitarian."

The New Testament speaks about God as Trinity, but so does the Old, with different terminology.

The Prophet Isaiah, eight hundred years before Christ, saw *"the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up"* and *"the house was full of His glory."* The Seraphim, however, stood in a circle round the throne with their six wings and *"one cried to another and said, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory.'"* (Is. 6:1-3). The Prophet saw the Lord of Glory, but the angels said 'Holy' three times.

This is an appearance of the Triune God through the Lord of Glory, Yahweh. There is God (Elohim), the Lord of Glory (Yahweh) and the *"Spirit of the Lord"*.

"In the Hebrew tradition and in the patristic tradition there are certain distinctions. There is God, Yahweh and the Spirit of God; God, the Angel and the Spirit of God; God, the Lord of Glory and the Spirit of God. There is a clear terminology concerning the Holy Trinity in the Old Testament.

In the New Testament, however, there is a difference because, apart from the Old Testament terminology, the Father and the Son are added. The only difference in the terminology concerning God

is that in the New Testament the Father and the Son are added. That is the difference between the Old and New Testaments. By reason of the incarnation, the God of the Old Testament is revealed as Father, and the Angel of the Old Testament as Son in the New Testament. Apart from this difference, there is no other difference between the terminology of the Old and New Testaments. This is the difference."

In the Old Testament, therefore, the Triune God is called: *God*; *Yahweh* or *the Angel of Great Counsel* or *the Lord of Glory*; and *the Spirit of God*. In the New Testament, in parallel with the Old Testament terminology, the terminology *Father, Son* or *Word*, and *Holy Spirit* is used, on account of the incarnation, since Christ has two natures; as man He was son of the Virgin, as God He was Son of the Father, and the incarnation, of course, came about through the Holy Spirit.

Subsequently, because heretics were using philosophical terminology ('essence', 'energy', 'persons', 'hypostases') the Fathers used another terminology, in parallel with the terminology of the Old and New Testaments, to speak about a Triune God with different persons and the same glory.

"Now there is another distinction, between the essence of God and the energy of God. Afterwards there are the hypostases. So we have essence, hypostasis and energy.

Are these distinctions that are made by the Fathers – and I am raising the most important question here – philosophical distinctions originating from the Fathers' philosophical thinking? Are these metaphysical or ontological distinctions that are made between essence and energy and the three hypostases, or do they come from the experience of glorification? The conclusion that I have reached is that in the patristic tradition the distinction between essence and energy is not philosophical but from experience."

That God is Trinity is confessed in the Old Testament, the New Testament and the teaching of the Fathers. It is the same truth, but a different terminology is used. The same experience is formulated with different names.

i. The Unincarnate Word

Since the revelations of God in the Old Testament are revelations of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity unincarnate, and since the Word has the same glory as the Father, as co-essential (*homoousios*) with Him, the Prophets of the Old Testament, who reached the vision of God, acquired experience of the glory of the Triune God.

It is noteworthy that, when the Fathers of the Church, such as St Athanasios the Great, discussed the dogma of the Holy Trinity with the Arians, they continually used passages from the Old Testament. What is more, the Apostolic Fathers also made extensive use of the Old Testament, as the Canon of the books of the New Testament had not yet been compiled.

> "The Fathers continuously discussed the dogma of the Holy Trinity on the basis of the Old Testament. The Old Testament is the dogma on the Holy Trinity, not just the New Testament. The New Testament is subsidiary. The Old Testament is full of references to Holy Trinity. Why? Because we have 'Elohim' and we have 'Yahweh'. When God appears, He is Yahweh, the Lord of Glory, the Angel of Glory in the burning bush, the Angel of Great Counsel, and so on. This is Yahweh appearing to human beings. The hidden God is Elohim.
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> So in the Old Testament we have a hidden God and we have a God Who appears. There is no difference between the two. Seeing Him Who appears, we see the One Who does not appear, because He is exactly the same. One is the image of the Other, the image of the invisible God, as the Apostle Paul says of Christ. When we see the image, we see the original, the archetype: *'He who has seen Me has seen the Father'* (John 14:9).
>
> The whole debate about the dogma of the Holy Trinity is inseparably linked with the Prophets' experience of glorification. The Prophets teach the doctrine of the Holy Trinity; it is not only taught by the New Testament.
>
> Today the professors tell us that we have monotheism in the Old Testament. The New Testament is now the revelation of the Holy Trinity. We have the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the New Tes-

tament. In the Old Testament we have neither the Father nor the Son. We have monotheism in the Old Testament and we now revert to Trinitarianism in the New Testament. Something like that, along those lines.

However, the Angel Who is called God in the Old Testament is the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. When we see the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, we see the original, the Father. Then we have the Holy Spirit, Who is the Spirit of glorification. Anyone who has the Spirit is glorified; through the Angel, through the One sent by God, he sees God. When we have the One Who is sent, looking at Him we see God Himself, because He is God."

When we read the Old Testament in the light of the experience of the New Testament and the Church, we realise that the Word of God revealed His glory to the Prophets of the Old Testament.

"The Old Testament makes a distinction between 'Elohim' and 'Yahweh', because whenever God is revealed, He is revealed in His Angel. There is 'the Angel of Glory', 'the Angel of Great Counsel', 'the Angel of the Lord' and so on.

This Angel in the Old Testament, Who continually appears to the Prophets, is Christ. This is the unanimous teaching of all the Fathers of the Church. It is the teaching of the patristic tradition and the liturgical tradition to this day.

Thus Christ revealed His glory to the Prophets. Anyone who wants to look at this process in great detail should read in the book of Exodus about all the experiences of Moses in this respect, and he will see what role the glory of God plays in these revelations, as well as the Angel Himself, Who continually appears everywhere..."

When the Prophets saw the unincarnate Word, they also saw the Father in the Word, and they understood that there was no difference between the Father and the Word. Christ's words also apply here: *"He who has seen Me has seen the Father"* (John 14:9).

"At this point we should stress yet again that by grace the Prophets saw Christ unincarnate in the uncreated glory of the Father, and they saw the Father only in the Word, the immutable and exact image of God.

The Prophets who saw and heard the Angel of Glory, saw and heard God Himself, without there being any difference in essence and energy between the separate person or hypostasis of God, except that One is the source of the existence of the Other and the Giver of His own essence and energy to the Other, so that the Other does not have them by grace but by nature."

The Word of God appeared in the bush that was burning but not consumed. Moses saw the glory of God as light, and this glory-light is identical in the Persons of the Holy Trinity. Thus the Persons of the Holy Trinity have the same glory, as is also clear from experience. What unites the Persons of the Holy Trinity?

"The identity of glory. The glory of the burning bush, in other words, the unburnt bush, that which is not created. There is nothing created. It is obvious that it is not something created. No Jew ever says that the glory of God that appears to the Prophets is something created. And when the Angel of the God appears, there is no doubt that He appears through the glory of God with light, and so on.

This is completely clear in the life of Moses. We see it again unmistakably in Philo Judaeus. Modern Jews, without knowing the teaching of the Orthodox Church, draw a clear distinction between the essence and energy of God."

"In the patristic tradition, however, the Prophet is someone who has been glorified. He has seen the glory of the Angel, or the Angel in glory, particularly in the experience of the burning bush, which Moses describes. God is there within, where the Light is. He is the Light by means of which Moses sees the Light. Then He is also the Fire that is the Holy Spirit. This is the patristic interpretation: that there is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. So Moses is within this Light, which does not burn, because it is a Fire that does not burn. It is a Fire that does not consume the bush. The bush remains intact, which clearly means that it is not created light, that the fire is not created. The fire is not created, because if the fire were created, it would have consumed the bush. Set fire to a bush here and we shall have a forest fire. Is that not so? Here in the Old Testament we have a burning bush that did not burn, that remained in-

tact. This cannot be created fire, unless it was a miracle. Because, unless you accept the Orthodox teaching on glorification, you will end up with a lot of miracles. The burning bush was not a miracle for the Orthodox tradition.

For the Franks and for Augustine, however, it was a great miracle. It was a created fire that did not burn the bush, the shrub. It was fire, but it did not burn the bush, and that was because God did not allow the fire to burn this object. Read the Old Testament. It is full of miracles, if you read it with Western eyes. If you read the Old Testament and the New Testament with patristic eyes, however, there are no miracles from this point of view. There are simply revelations of the glory of God. There are revelations."

The Word revealed to the Prophets was uncreated, that is to say, God. What is created was made at some point in time; what is uncreated is not made, it is God.

"For this reason we have an interpretative rule from St Basil the Great which is the key to the whole interpretative tradition regarding the Old Testament. St Basil says clearly: Wherever the angel in the Old Testament is specifically called God, He is the Word Who appears to the Prophets."

St Basil, countering the heretical views of Eunomios, said that every time there is a manifestation of God in the Old Testament in which the appearance of the Angel of the Lord is mentioned and the word 'God' is added, He is the only-begotten Son of God.

For instance, the Angel who appeared to Jacob and wrestled with him was the only-begotten Son of God. Jacob was sure of this when he related the vision: *"Then the Angel of God spoke to me...I am the God Who appeared to you at Bethel, where you anointed the pillar and made a vow to Me"* (Gen. 31:11-13). Also, the Angel of the Lord appeared to Moses *"in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush"* and he saw *"the bush burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed"* (Ex. 3:2). Although the Angel of the Lord is mentioned, the voice of God is heard telling him, *"'I am the God of your father - the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' Moses then hid his face"* (Ex. 3:6). When Moses asked what His name was, the Angel of the Lord

replied, *"I AM the Existing One"* (Ex. 3:14). This Angel of the Lord was Yahweh, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. In his interpretation of this passage, St Basil the Great gives us the interpretative rule:

"It is clear to all that wherever the same person is called both angel and God, the Only-begotten is signified, Who manifests Himself to human beings from generation to generation and announces the will of the Father to His saints. So He Who to Moses gave Himself the name 'He Who Is' is to be understood as none other than God the Word, Who is in the beginning with God."

The fact that the Prophets saw the glory of God means that they participated in God and reached glorification. It is significant that in the unincarnate Word the Prophets saw the Father, and the Triune God in general, as glory and light.

The Prophets knew the Word of God. That is why Moses and Elijah appeared together with Christ at Christ's Transfiguration.

> "I started from the Angel of the Lord, the burning bush, the theophanies in the Old Testament, in order to stress that – if you look at the writings of the Fathers, particularly at the sermons of the Fathers when they interpret the Old Testament – this is the Holy Trinity, it is Christ Who appears to the Prophets. The first to know Christ were the Prophets, but Christ was unincarnate, He had not yet taken flesh. Through the unincarnate Christ or the Angel of Glory, they knew the Father, God, because they had the Holy Spirit."

To distinguish the Persons of the Holy Trinity, they were named 'Father', 'Son' and 'Holy Spirit' by Christ, the Apostles and the saints. Later, this experience was described in the language of that era, in order to oppose heretics. Thus the terms 'essence', 'energy', 'person-hypostasis' and 'hypostatic property' were used. Nevertheless, in the vision of God, God is seen as light.

Anyone who reads the writings of St Athanasios the Great and other Fathers will realise that they took the arguments that they used against the Arians from the Old Testament, because the Prophets also saw the Father in the Word, and this came about through the Holy Spirit.

ii. The Angel of Great Counsel

The unincarnate Word in the Old Testament was revealed as the Angel of Great Counsel, as the Angel of Glory. At the same time we encounter appearances of various angels in the Old Testament. Thus a clear distinction is made between the Angel of Glory, who is the uncreated Word, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, and created angels, who are beings created by God. This is easily discernible during the experience of revelation. The Angel of Glory is the Word, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, Who is the icon of the Father and has the same glory and the same light as the Father, and, of course, as the Holy Spirit.

The issue of the Angel of Great Counsel is the fundamental, crucial point for understanding and interpreting the Old Testament. Who was this Angel of the Lord? Was He created or uncreated? Is there a connection between this Angel of the Lord and the Wisdom of Solomon?

> "There are two matters: how the Old Testament was written, and how it is interpreted. These are not the same thing. How it was written and how it is interpreted are two different issues. The Old Testament is interpreted on the basis of the New Testament. That is how the Old Testament is interpreted. What does the Apostle Paul mean by the words: *"That Rock* [following them] *was Christ"* (1 Cor. 10:4)? Who was this rock that followed them? It was Christ.
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> So when Christ Himself is manifested by John and says: *"He* [Moses] *wrote about Me"* (John 5:46) and so on, in what form did he write? About whom did he write? About the Angel of the Lord. That Angel, who appears everywhere in the Pentateuch, according to the patristic tradition is Christ. And is he not Christ for the Apostle Paul as well? Who is it Who appears? And what is the key? It is the Wisdom of Solomon. If you look at the Wisdom of Solomon and take every instance in which it speaks of Wisdom, you will see who Wisdom is. It is the Angel of the Lord, because it describes all the work of Wisdom, and it runs in parallel with the Pentateuch. Read the two texts in parallel and you will see that the Wisdom of Solomon does no more than describe what Christ did in the Pentateuch. That is what it does. This is obvious, absolutely obvious.

Afterwards, if you read Philo Judaeus – that is, their own interpretations of Philo – you see that this way of interpreting the Old Testament is not a patristic invention, as there was a whole Hebrew tradition of interpreting the Old Testament in this way. And our own people mistake them all for philosophers, including Philo and John the Evangelist. They say absolutely anything."

This is vividly seen in the hymnography of the Church and in its whole tradition.

"It is Christ Who appears to the Prophets in all the theophanies. In all the divine manifestations. Christ in the Old Testament is the Angel of the Lord, the Lord of Glory, Yahweh, the Lord Sabaoth, the Angel of Great Counsel and so on.

If you want to see the patristic interpretation of these issues, take the hymnography of the Church and you will see that it is full of the patristic perception of Christ in the Old Testament. This is the key to the Old Testament from the point of view of Orthodox theology. It is an interpretation of the Old Testament that is not absent from the Hebrew tradition. We need only take Philo Judaeus. Philo accepts that God exists, that the Wisdom of God, who is the Word, exists and that the energies of God, which are uncreated, exist and that the Wisdom of God, not God Himself, appears in the burning bush.

One key to the Old Testament is the Wisdom of Solomon. If you take the interpretation of the Pentateuch set out in the Wisdom of Solomon, you will see in it all the patristic interpretation of the Old Testament. Wherever the Lord of Glory, the Angel of the Lord, is in the Pentateuch, the Wisdom of Solomon calls Him the Wisdom of God. It is clear, therefore, Who the Wisdom of God is. It is the Word of the Fourth Gospel: Christ.

Christ appears to the Prophets in the Old Testament and the Prophets saw Christ, uncreated in the Old Testament, not created. There is no created Christ even in the Old Testament. Christ in the Old Testament is uncreated. He is the Angel who appears to the Prophets."

Certainly in the Old Testament the Prophets saw the 'Angel of Great Counsel', the 'Angel of Glory', the unincarnate Word, the Wisdom of God, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity before the incarnation.

They did not depict Him, however, because there is no likeness between created and uncreated things. The depiction of Christ takes place after the incarnation.

"Before the incarnation, in the Old Testament, not even the Angel was depicted, because He is uncreated. As there is no similarity between what is uncreated and what is created – which is a dogma of the Orthodox Church and of the Jewish tradition – what is uncreated cannot be represented. He begins to be represented as a man only at the incarnation.

In the Old Testament, although the experience of glorification transcends all concepts and words, it is still forbidden to depict God."

The Angel of Great Counsel in the Old Testament is the unincarnate Word, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity.

"When someone reads the Old Testament and sees the burning bush there, it is the Angel of the Lord. It is Christ, but the reader cannot identify the Angel in the burning bush with the hypostasis of the Word of God. Because when Moses sees and hears the Angel of the Lord, he hears God Himself. We also have other instances in the Old Testament where Christ appears.

The Old Testament is absolutely clear about distinguishing between the Person of the Father and the Person of Word. The Angel of the Lord cannot be identified with God Himself. Because 'angel' means 'messenger', and this Angel is called God. This Angel is uncreated."

In the teaching of the holy Fathers they seem to refer continually to the Angel of Glory, because the Prophets knew the Holy Trinity through Him.

"What I want to emphasise is this: Why is it that the Fathers interpret the Old Testament and speak about the Angel of Glory, the Angel of the Lord and so on? For the Fathers, this is the teaching about the Holy Trinity in the Old Testament and the New Testament. Why do they speak about the Angel of the Lord, about the theophanies of the Angel of Glory, the experience of glorification in the Old Testament and the New Testament? They are speaking about the Holy Trinity.

This is the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. There was no need for them to speak about one essence and three hypostases, nor about being co-essential (*homoousios*). These issues did not concern them. What concerned them was that, because this Angel is the image of the invisible God, God cannot have a created image. That is why it is forbidden to depict God. Uncreated God cannot have an image. This is also the teaching of the Seventh Ecumenical Council. That is why the Father is not represented on icons. We depict Christ, Who is the image of the Father and took flesh."

The Angel of Great Counsel in the Old Testament is Christ.

"When the Angel of Glory or the Lord of Glory appears to Israel by means of the Prophets in His glory as an uncreated cloud, fire, darkness, smoke and lightning, Who led His people, destroyed their enemies and dwelt in the tabernacle and in the Temple, and when in this way He communicated directly by means of His own natural and uncreated glory, these are not only symbols of the future communion between God and man in Christ and the Church, but are already a true communion between the unincarnate Word and His people Israel.

The Angel or the Lord of Glory of Israel is precisely Christ Himself. And His Old Testament glory, the throne of divinity, the cloud and the darkness, the Light in which He clothes Himself and appears to them within that uncreated Holy of Holies: these are His natural energy and power by means of which He reveals Himself within and through His human nature, which He took from the Virgin Mary."

We shall look further at the unincarnate Word, the Angel of Great Counsel in the Old Testament, Who afterwards became Christ through the incarnation in a later chapter.

b) Persons – Essence – Energy

The experience of the Triune God as Light was important for the Apostles, as is clear throughout their Epistles, where they speak of the glory of God, the fact that the Son and Word is the image of the invisible God, and so on. In manifestations of God the glorified participate in the glory of God.

"For us the Holy Trinity begins from the Old Testament, where there were some theophanies. In the early Church there were not three hypostases. This is a terminology that was introduced so that they could bring in new words to defeat heresies, not to explain the dogma."

"In the early Church the Fathers did not use the term 'essence'. They avoided it. In the experience of glorification they did not see any essence. They saw the glory, the energy of God. They also experienced the three hypostases. The experience of revelation brings man into contact with the hypostases and the glory, the three Lights and the one Light. The divinity of threefold Light is the hypostases, and the one Light is the glory. So they saw as one and as three. Of course they did not see the essence. As they did not see the essence, they did not use any word for it.

When they were eventually forced to use the term 'essence', the term 'supra-essential' emerged: 'supra-essential divinity'. Again, 'essence' began to mean 'existence-bestowing power' and not the essence itself, which is supra-essential and anonymous, without a name..."

The ancient Gnostics made a distinction between the "invisible God" in the Old Testament, Who is "the real God, beyond everything and beyond essence" and the "God Who appears", Who is "visible", the creator of the world and therefore lower God. The Fathers reacted against this view, as there are not two gods, a higher and a lower, but one God the Creator, and there is "identity of glory, identity of energy".

The Monarchians, reacting against the Gnostics, said that the two Persons of the Holy Trinity, the Father and the Son, not only have "one glory, one power, one energy, one will", but also have "one essence and one hypostasis". In other words, they identified the essence with the hypostasis. Countering this heretical teaching by means of the Fathers, the Church began to say that the Persons of the Holy Trinity have one essence and three hypostases.

"The Church started forming a terminology about essence and hypostases, not because it needed to do so for itself, but to counteract heresy. In opposing heresy, the Church is obliged to speak the language of the heretic and to tell him, 'You are mistaken. There is not one hypostasis, one essence. There are three hypostases.'

> The dogma, however, is neither three hypostases nor one essence. What is the dogma? The dogma is that the Lord of Glory, the Angel of Glory, the Angel of Great Counsel Who appears to the Prophets and is now incarnate, is Christ Himself, Who appears in the Old Testament to all the Prophets. The Prophets saw Christ without flesh and now they see Him in flesh. This distinction is the doctrine of the Holy Trinity."

The terms 'hypostasis', 'nature' and 'essence' were used by the Fathers to formulate the experience of the Holy Trinity that they had received, and to deal with the philosophical preoccupation of the hellenised Christian Gnostics, who were corrupting the revelation. All the meanings of these terms exist in Holy Scripture.

> "For the Fathers of the Church, the fact that the Father has one hypostasis and the Son another is terminology that does not exist either in the Old Testament or in the New Testament. But the concepts are there."

Consequently, the terminology 'hypostasis', 'essence' and so on was not devised so that we could understand God, but to safeguard the empirical truth, as it was revealed to the saints who attained to theoria (vision) of God in an era when there was confusion. On this issue too there is an obvious difference between philosophical and theological thinking.

> "From the philosophical point of view, there is nothing more stupid than saying three hypostases and one essence. It is complete stupidity from the point of view of reasoning and philosophy. Sheer nonsense. But not from the theological point of view. Why not from the theological point of view? Because in the absolutely final analysis, having said three hypostases and one essence, God is neither hypostases nor essence.
>
> The other significant point is that, whereas in the beginning the Church tolerated discussion about hypostases or three essences, three hypostases, it did not want to speak about one essence, because the essence of God is nameless. It has no name and cannot be shared; man can have no contact with God's essence. He has contact with the energies of God. Nor can man be united with the hypostases. There is only one hypostatic union and that is in Christ.

The Church wanted to avoid the terminology 'one essence', and after it agreed to speak about one essence, they soon started saying 'supra-essential' (*hyperousion*): 'supra-essential hiddenness' and so on. Again this was a correction, because the essence of God does not have essence, as God is supra-essential. Names are never ascribed to the essence, to the supra-essential hiddenness. We only give names to the energies of God and to the hypostases, because we have the incarnation to enable us to differentiate the hypostasis of the Word from the hypostasis of the Father and the Holy Spirit, lest we believe that the whole Holy Trinity took flesh. The Second Person of the Holy Trinity became incarnate. This differentiation of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, Who took flesh, obliged the Church to speak of three hypostases, three essences in the beginning. Then afterwards the Arian and Sabellian heresies made it necessary for the Church to refer to one essence.

Here we have something very interesting. There is a work ascribed to Athanasios that says that God is not of one single essence (*monoousios*). And since it says this, they say that it is not a genuine work by Athanasios. Is it possible for Athanasios to say that God does not have one single essence? Yes, but show me where it says that God is a single essence? He says 'co-essential' (*homoousios*). But he does not state anywhere that God is one single essence. He says 'one divinity'. He says 'one energy', 'one power', and all the other names he says are single in God. But I for one, personally, have never found the words 'one essence'. Why does he not say that God is not of one single essence? Because in certain parts of his writings he says, 'essence, that is to say, hypostasis, or hypostasis, that is to say, essence'.

The first draft of the Nicene Creed says that the Word is from the hypostasis or the essence of the Father. Both terms are there. The fact that the Word is from the essence or from the hypostasis of the Father means that He is God, because created things come from non-being. This is the technical terminology, that created things are all created from nothing, whereas the Word and the Spirit are from the hypostasis of the Father."

Later, of course, the Cappadocian Fathers separated the essence

from the hypostasis in order to confront another heresy, and this distinction was defined by the Fathers of the Second Ecumenical Council.

"The Cappadocian Fathers certainly did not invent this distinction. This distinction existed. Certain people were already using it, but they put their seal on it with the great prestige of the Cappadocians, and afterwards the others saw that it was a good formulation and precise.

Distinguishing between essence and hypostasis avoids the danger posed by Paul of Samosata and his use of the term '*homoousios*'. The danger of Paul of Samosata was that '*homoousios*' could mean 'identical in essence' (*tautousios*) and then, because the essence had not been distinguished from the hypostasis, '*homoousios*' could mean 'of like hypostasis', signifying that the Father and the Son together have the same hypostasis and the same essence. The two, therefore, end up being energies of God and not being actual Persons. This is the heresy of the Sabellians and Paul of Samosata.

They therefore distinguish the essence from the hypostasis. Thus there is no longer any danger in using the term 'co-essential' (*homoousios*), but not 'of like hypostasis'. The Son is co-essential with the Father, the Spirit is co-essential with the Father and the Persons are co-essential between Themselves, but not of like hypostasis, because They do not share the same hypostasis."

At the same time the Fathers of the Church spoke of essence and energy in God. This usage was not the outcome of philosophical speculation but the result of personal experience. When, after meeting certain preconditions, they arrived at the vision of God, they saw the Light that they called the energy of God, but they did not see God's essence.

"The patristic distinction between essence and energy is extremely important, because in the experience of revelation no one has ever come to know the essence of God. Those who reach this state tell us from their experience that it is not possible for a created being to know the essence of God.

As we do not know the essence of God and it is impossible for us to know it, but we know some of God's energies, this means that that the distinction between essence and energy does not originate

from speculation or from the philosophy of any philosopher who might attain to the knowledge of this distinction.

This distinction does not come from philosophy, with which we are familiar, nor from any philosopher's speculation. It does not even come from revelation, if we misunderstand revelation as a revelation of words. It comes from the experience itself, which transcends words and concepts."

That the distinction between essence and energy in God is not philosophical and the outcome of conjecture is clear from the fact that, when the Fathers were granted divine vision, they did not see the words 'essence' and 'energy', but participated in the glory of God, which they called 'energy'. And when they used the word 'essence' they were speaking about the 'supra-essential divinity'.

An analogy with the sun applies here. We see the light of the sun, which we call its energy, without participating in the essence of the sun, because if we tried to look straight at the sun we would be blinded.

"The distinction between essence and energy in God is not the result of a revelation made in words. God does not say to man in created words, 'Children, know that in Me there is a distinction between essence and energy,' so that we would have the Prophets' teaching in Holy Scripture that essence is not the same as energy. Why not? Because the Holy Spirit taught us this distinction. We do not learn this distinction through words. This distinction is learnt by experience."

The distinction between essence and energy in God was examined by the Fathers and by the heretics who used philosophy. The Fathers spoke about this distinction from their personal experience.

"From the experience of participation in the energies of God, [someone who is glorified] knows that he does not participate in God's essence, so the distinction between essence and energy in God results from experience. This distinction does not come from philosophy but from the experience of glorification. It is very significant that the actual experience of glorification forms the basis of this distinction."

Heretics spoke about differentiating essence and energy in God in a different way from the Fathers of the Church.

"Paul of Samosata accepts the distinction between essence and energy. Arius himself and the Nestorians also accept the distinction between essence and energy in God. The first to reject this distinction were the Eunomians. And, strangely enough, Augustine too, who in the West is the only one who rejects this distinction. On account of Augustine, all the scholastic theologians in the Frankish tradition rejected the distinction between essence and energy in God.

The patristic distinction between essence and energy is not conjectural but empirical. This is highly significant. The Arians, particularly Paul of Samosata, accept this distinction, but they give it a philosophical interpretation. We have a philosophical interpretation of the distinction in Arius, Paul of Samosata and Nestorius. This distinction, once it acquired a philosophical meaning, is also the basis of Paul of Samosata's heresy about the incarnation, the Arian heresy about the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, and the Nestorian heresy about the incarnation. Nestorius' teaching with regard to incarnation is not very different from Paul of Samosata's teaching on incarnation."

The theological language that distinguishes essence from energy in God does not originate from philosophy but from the experience of revelation. The terms belong to that era and were also used by philosophers and heretics who were speculative thinkers. The holy Fathers adopted the terms and gave them another meaning in accordance with their experience.

The glorified understood empirically important points about God. One is that that the glory-energy of God is no different from the glory-energy of the Angel of Great Counsel in the Old Testament. It is the same glory. Thus they understood from experience that in the Old Testament the unincarnate Word appears and in the New Testament the incarnate Word.

"There are not two glories. The glory of God is one; the energy of this revelation of God and the Angel is one. There are not two revelations. There is one revelation, because one only sees the Angel in the glory of God, and in the Angel he sees God, because He is the image of God."

Then they perceive empirically that 'behind' the glory-energy of

God, which they see and in which they participate, there is 'something else', which they are unable to see or share, just as we are unable to see the disc of the sun or go to the sun. This 'something else' they called 'essence' and they said that the Persons of the Holy Trinity have one essence.

"We now say 'one essence'. Is this acceptable, as we do not know what is behind the glory? We have experience of the glory of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. We know that God is one divinity, one energy and so one. There is a problem here.

Nowadays when Westerners and perhaps Orthodox Christians read St Athanasios the Great they cannot find anywhere that he speaks about one essence, but he speaks about three hypostases and says: 'hypostasis, that is to say, essence'. It is a serious mistake for someone to say today that St Athanasios the Great identifies the essence with the hypostasis. Why, however, did Athanasios avoid speaking about one essence? Because we do not know the essence of God.

Man has no experience of the essence of God. He has experience, however, of the glory and the divinity, because in Athanasios divinity means glory and energy. Divinity means essence in the Antiochene tradition. In Eustathios of Antioch we encounter for the first time the divinity being identified with the essence, the noun 'essence' also denoting divinity, and the noun 'God' also denoting the essence. This is an Antiochene idiosyncrasy. Afterwards it appears in certain Westerners as well.

In Alexandria and Cappadocia they avoided naming God's essence, because God's essence does not participate and is unknown and incomprehensible, and we shall never know it. Not even the angels know it. So even to give a name to something we do not know is a pointless act."

The Fathers call the essence unknown and incommunicable, as they cannot acquire knowledge of it or share in it, in contrast with the energy of God, which man can know and share in.

"For the Fathers of the Church the essence of God is unknown to all created beings, including the angels. The essence of God is known only to God. Not only now but for ever and ever God's es-

sence will be known only to Him. Created beings do not participate in the essence of God but participate in some energies of God.

How do they participate? Not by understanding, by intellectual participation. There is no intellectual participation by means of philosophical conjecture. There is, however, participation through purification of the heart and illumination of the heart. Without purification of the heart and illumination of the heart there is no participation in the uncreated energy of God and no knowledge. For that reason a philosopher cannot know the energies of God. Only someone who passes through the stages of perfection can know some of God's energies. When someone reaches illumination he also receives the gift of discernment of spirits."

For this reason Fathers also give various names to the energies of God in which they share, according to the result that they produce, such as love, righteousness, benevolence, peace and so on. They do not give names to the essence, however, as they regard it as nameless. Again, they do this from their experience and not as the result of philosophical influences and speculation.

"If something is outside the scope of man's experience he cannot give it a name. As it is God's energy that falls within man's experience, none of the names ascribed to God ever apply to His essence. And as the essence is existence-bestowing power, what we call essence became at an earlier period 'supra-essential hiddenness'."

Some characterise this distinction between God's essence and energy as negative and positive theology. That is to say, they regard participation in the energy of God as positive theology, but call the unknown essence in which none can participate negative theology. In the patristic tradition, however, even what is known about God is understood in a way past understanding, through the purification of the heart and not through rational and intellectual activity. Participation in God and knowledge of Him is different from knowledge of created things, which comes about through rational thought processes.

"Because many people were interested in the subject of negative and positive theology, it became customary in Greece to link this distinction with the distinction between essence and energy. If this is the

case, positive theology refers to God's energies, and they think that negative theology refers to the essence of God, since God's essence always remains unknown to man and God's energies become known.

Certainly the Fathers use this language, referring to the 'unknown' and the 'known'. What is known of God is God's energies. The Fathers, however, when they speak about what is known of God, do not mean intellectually known. They mean what man can share. They mean that it is impossible to participate in the essence and what can be participated in is the energy. They mean that what can be shared can be known, and what cannot be shared cannot be known.

When man arrives at participation in the glory of God or the divine energy, he knows God, but in a way past understanding, not intellectually. This knowledge transcends concepts and words. We always come back to what St Gregory the Theologian says – it best conveys this tradition – 'It is impossible to express God and even more impossible to conceive Him.' This applies not only to God's essence but also to God's energies. Man can participate in the energy of God. Participation is of two types, at least from the point of view of salvation. There is illumination, when the Holy Spirit prays within one's heart. That is called illumination, but afterwards there is also glorification-*theosis*.

In the experience of glorification not only are concepts abolished, but prayer itself comes to an end. There is no prayer in the experience of glorification; there is God Himself, Who in any case can only be participated in according to His energy. It is only possible to share in His energy, and this energy of God transcends concepts and words. There are no concepts and words about the energies of God. We do not use these words and concepts in order to understand God, but in order to be united with God. These are two different things. When someone is united with God, God remains unknown, not just in His essence but also in His energies. He remains a mystery and unknown to man: unknown from the philosophical point of view, known in the experience of glorification.

Concepts are certainly used in the experience of illumination, because man's illumination itself consists of words and concepts. Because prayer is words and concepts."

The Fathers, in order to express this unknown that they do not see, which hides 'behind' the glory-energy, call it 'essence'. Nevertheless, this word 'essence' is not positive, something that we know, something that relates to the essences of the created world that we know. For that reason they called the essence 'supra-essential hiddenness' and the energy 'essential energy'. Although a distinction is made between essence and energy, this distinction is not real, as there is a relationship between essence and energy and the energy is called essential energy. This distinction, however, comes about from our own experience, as we can participate in the energy-glory of God and not in His essence.

> "The essence of the Cappadocian Fathers signifies 'supra-essential hiddenness,' as in Dionysios the Areopagite."

In addition, the Fathers know from their own experience that the essence and energy are not independent of the Persons of the Holy Trinity. We have already noted that the God-seers see three Lights, "a divinity of threefold Light", of which one is the source of the other two. The second originates from the first, but has flesh, since it became incarnate. And the other proceeds from the first, it is called the 'third' and it has not taken flesh. Thus they are called the first, second and third in this order, not in order of superiority and worth, but of cause, as we shall see below.

The God-seers share in the energy-glory of God. They do not share in the essence of God, which exists, but they know that neither the glory-energy nor the essence is impersonal. This they know because they hear the voice of God saying *"I AM the Existing One"* (Ex. 3:14) and sense His love.

Thus they understand that the Persons of the Holy Trinity have the same energy and the same essence. The Persons of the Holy Trinity have mutual union and communion as regards essence. In the Second Person of the Holy Trinity the divine nature was united hypostatically with the human nature, while we share in the uncreated energy of the Triune God. That is to say, we are united with God according to His energy.

> "There is no essence without hypostasis. Consequently in God there is communion of essence, but not communion of hypostases. The hypostases are not shared. There is communion of essence,

so the Father communicates the essence to the Word and the Holy Spirit. He gives existence to the Son and the Holy Spirit."

Thus the subject-matter of Orthodox theology is not the essence of God but the energies of God. Human beings participate in many different ways in God's energy. The aim of the Church is the glorification of man, that man may attain to participation in the uncreated glory of God.

"We know from Orthodox theology that we do not know the essence of God and that we cannot know the hypostases of God. All we can know about God is a few things about the energies of God.

But we only know that after we have passed through the stage of purification and reached the stage of illumination. Then, at the stage of illumination, there is the gift of discernment of spirits, which means the discernment of energies. Then someone learns, from discernment and experience, under the guidance of a spiritual father, to distinguish between the uncreated energies of God and created energies, mainly of the devil.

When he reaches this point and knows how to discern between these two types of energy, this is theology. The subject-matter of theology cannot be the essence of God. It cannot be the hypostases of God. The subject-matter of theology is the energies of God. And as the energies of God are only known when they are discerned by the illuminated nous, everything is conditional on us learning when God is acting in us and when the devil is active. This is theology. No other theology exists."

What is more, the Fathers know from experience that the energy of God is in the whole of creation and it depends on man how he will react to it. This is connected with human freedom.

"It is everywhere present and pervades everything – this energy of God is everywhere. It is in every human being. It is the basic mystery of the presence of God, that God is indivisibly divided among divided beings. So the whole of God is present in every human being, but every human being has a spark of the uncreated grace of God, what we call in more recent theory 'initial grace'. Everyone has this, not just the Orthodox, all human beings have it.

Then this energy of God directly influences every human being. That is to say, God Himself influences everyone in the world through this grace and they act. Some people react positively, others react less positively, others are hardened and do not react at all. Those who are hardened, however, are not only among the non-Orthodox. There are hard-hearted Orthodox. The non-Orthodox have this energy and the Orthodox also have this energy. So what is the difference between the Orthodox and the others, as they have the same grace within them, the same glory and rule (*vasileia*)* of God? What is the difference?

Apart from the fact that this grace is initial grace, in the Orthodox tradition, in the apostolic period, we have people who have spiritual experience, who reacted to this grace that is within them in such a manner that this spark became a flame. That is why Christ says to His Apostles at one point, *'You are the light of the world'* (Matt. 5:14)."

Whereas the God-seers of the Church know all this from their experience, blessed Augustine, by contrast, who influenced Western theology, proclaimed that the essence of God could be known by means of reasoning and conjecture, as we also encounter in ancient Greek philosophy.

"Augustine believed that he could conceive not only the energy of God but also the essence of God. He says so clearly in his second book: 'We shall not hesitate to investigate the essence of God, either from the works of God or from the teachings', by which he means philosophy.

The greatest mistake of the ancient Greek philosophers is that they reduced observation and increased the importance of thought more than was necessary. The ancient Greeks believed that by thinking they could understand the truth and not through the senses, because they realised that in some cases the senses are deceptive. It seems that something is as it appears to be, but in reality it is not as they suppose it to be."

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* **glory and rule (*vasileia*) of God** = kingdom of God. See 'Note by the Author' p. 37 - Translator's note

Generally speaking, through the experience of divine vision the saints formulated dogma regarding the theology of the Triune God.

> "This is clearly how the axioms were developed that we have two specific things in the Holy Trinity. Firstly, what is common to the three Persons, and secondly what is individual and belongs only to one Person. The essence or nature and its natural will, power and energy belong in common to the three Hypostases by nature and with absolute equality and lordship, whereas each of the hypostatic properties or qualities or characteristics belongs to only one Hypostasis and they are for ever completely incommunicable."

There is identity of essence and energy between the Persons of the Holy Trinity. This means that the energy of the Triune God is shared and this is the subject of a revelation from God to man.

> "The most essential presupposition was the absolute identity of energy and will between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, which means an absolute identity of essence. The one energy and one will of the Holy Trinity are clearly revelations of the one uncreated essence and nature."

c) Manner of Existence of the Persons of the Holy Trinity

In the experience of glorification-divine vision the Apostles and Fathers do not see some sort of essence or nature, but three Lights as one Light. They see the "divinity of threefold Light," "so they see as one and as three". One Light is the cause of the two other Lights.

This whole theology is expressed in the vocabulary of the language of the time. Thus the God-seers, in order to describe the relationships of the Persons of the Holy Trinity, used the words 'Father', 'Son-Word' and 'Holy Spirit', which were also in accord with the words of Christ. In addition, they used the expressions 'cause' and 'manner of existence'.

The Father begets the Word and causes the Holy Spirit to proceed before all ages. This is called 'manner of existence' by the Fathers and indicates the cause of the existence of the Persons of the Holy Trinity. The cause or manner of coming into existence of the Father is unbegottenness; the cause or manner of coming into existence of the Word is begottenness; and the cause or manner of coming into existence of

the Holy Spirit is procession. The unbegottenness of the Father, the begottenness of the Son and the procession of the Holy Spirit are the hypostatic properties of the Persons of the Holy Trinity.

> "To beget and to cause to proceed do not appertain to the essence of God, as it is not the essence that begets and causes to proceed, but the hypostasis of the Father."
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> "The Cappadocian Fathers taught that the Father as hypostasis, and not as essence, begets the Son and causes the Holy Spirit to proceed. The Father's hypostasis and not the divine essence generates the Son and causes the Holy Spirit to proceed."

Certainly generation and procession are the subject of God's revelation and do not lend themselves to rational understanding.

> "Augustine, for instance, says that God is the continuous present. In God there is no past or future, but God is the continuous present. This is incorrect from the Orthodox point of view. God is neither past nor future, but neither is He the continuous present. The continuous present is a category of time. Insofar as God is neither past nor future nor continuous present, how can man's reason surmount all these things so as to comprehend?
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> That is why Gregory the Theologian says to the Eunomians: 'Explain to me what generation means and I shall explain to you the meaning of procession, and we shall both go mad for prying into the mysteries of God.' Human beings can never understand the mysteries of God. For that reason the Fathers of the Church speak about the generation of the Word from the Father, but they emphasise that they do not know what this generation is. They know that it is the manner of existence of the Word from the Father, but what this manner of existence is cannot be described. It is something we say and nothing more.
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> 'Begotten of the Father' means that the Word has His existence from the Father and not from nothing. When, for instance, a horse sires a colt, the colt is co-essential (*homoousios*) with its father, but when I produce a statue it is not co-essential with its creator father. I am not co-essential with the statue. I am the maker of the statue. For that reason, when we say that the Word is co-essential with the Father, it means that, as human sons are the same as their fathers,

the same applies to this Son. 'Co-essential with the Father' means that whatever the Father is, the Son is too. The one is uncreated, the other is uncreated too. The one has a hypostasis, the other has a hypostasis too. This is what it means."

This experience of divine vision granted to the saints was defined in the decisions of the Ecumenical Councils.

"In the final arrangement of the definitions, as they are reflected in the Creed of the Second Ecumenical Council, and as is clearly taught in the writings of the Fathers of this Council, the Son is begotten or receives His being through generation, from the hypostasis of the Father, and consequently He receives eternally and possesses by nature the essence of the Father and all the natural powers and energies of this essence. Thus the Son has everything that the Father has except Fatherhood and the fact that [the Father] is the Source of [the Son's] existence and the existence of the Holy Spirit."

The term 'cause' originated from this context: that the Father is the cause of the existence of the Son and Holy Spirit.

"In the first period the Fathers speak of the Father Who begets the Word and causes the Holy Spirit to proceed. The Cappadocians introduced the idea of 'cause' for the first time. Generation signifies 'cause of existence'. That is why we have the Father as the cause of existence of the Word through generation and of the Holy Spirit through procession. When the essence was also added, they then said that the essence was not begotten of the Father nor did the essence proceed from the Father, but the Father communicates His essence to the Son by generation and to the Holy Spirit by procession."

The term 'manner of existence' came from the Arian dispute. The Fathers wanted to set out the relationships between the Persons of the Holy Trinity and stressed that the manner of existence of the Persons of the Holy Trinity is something different from Their unity in the same essence and energy.

In other words, the Persons of the Holy Trinity share in the same essence and energy, but the manner of existence of each Person (unbegottenness, begottenness, procession) is incommunicable. Thus, in the Persons of the Holy Trinity there are things that are common and

things that are incommunicable. We cannot therefore speak of a 'communion of Persons'.

"In the East, in the Arian controversy, the term 'cause' emerged: that the Father is the cause of the existence of the Word. Then 'generation' was identified with the cause, that the Father is the cause. Therefore, when they say 'generation', it refers to manner of existence. That is to say, that the Father is the cause of the existence of the Word and of the Holy Spirit. This is existence. Manner of existence means that the Father gives existence to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

Now, if someone spoke in this way in the West today, they would think that he was mad. If you go and say this to a Protestant or a Papal* Christian they will be absolutely amazed that we can speak in this way about the Holy Trinity. But this was how the Fathers spoke.

Why did they speak in this way? Because they did not speak about an abstract Word. They were talking about the specific Word Who appeared to the Prophets. They asked, 'From where does this Word have His existence? Is He from non-being or from the Father? From the Father. And as He has His existence from the Father and He is not from non-being, He is uncreated.'

How does the Word have His existence from the Father? In the earliest period they simply say that He has His existence from the Father. He is from the Father. Generation does not mean manner of existence, and in the earliest period the Word's manner of existence from the Father was not identified with generation. Afterwards, in the Arian controversy, generation was identified by both the Arians and the Orthodox with manner of existence. Thus He exists from the Father by generation; He has His existence from the Father and the Father is the cause of the existence of the Son through generation. Later the same question was asked with regard to the Holy Spirit. This is the situation with regard to hypostases. The Father is from nothing. He has His existence from nothing. Not even from Himself. This is obvious.

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* **Papal (*Papikos*)** = Roman Catholic. See 'Note by the Author' p. 37 - Translator's note

What needs emphasising now, however, is that God's essence and God's energy do not have a manner of existence. God has His essence and His energy by nature. When the Father begets the Son, causes the Holy Spirit to proceed and gives existence to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, He communicates His essence and His energy to the Word and the Holy Spirit. There is therefore communion of essence and energy, but not communion of Persons. He does not communicate the Person, the hypostasis, to the Word, but He is the cause of the existence of the hypostasis. He gives existence also to the hypostasis of the Word, His already-existing essence, which does not have a manner of existence but is simply essence from the Father. The same happens with the Holy Spirit. The manner of existence is not the same thing as sharing the essence and energy. For that reason the manner of existence belongs to the incommunicable properties of God. There are hypostases: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. And then there are the common characteristics."

The manner of existence of the Son and the Holy Spirit signifies that the cause of their existence is the Father.

"Manner of existence according to the Fathers means cause of existence, so the Word and the Holy Spirit have the cause of their existence in the Father."

"The manner of existence of the Father is causelessness, the other Persons are produced by a cause. Since He is without a cause, the Father's manner of existence is causelessness. But the essence of the Father is not included in the manner of existence, because the Father is the cause of the existence of the hypostases of the Word and of the Holy Spirit, but He is not the cause of the existence of the essence of the Holy Spirit and the Word, because He communicates His own essence to the other Persons."

The manner of existence of the Persons of the Holy Trinity is not the essence, but the hypostatic properties are the manner of existence of the hypostases. Therefore the unbegottenness of the Father, the begottenness of the Son and the procession of the Holy Spirit are called hypostatic properties.

"There are three manners of existence: unbegottenness, begottenness and procession. Manners of existence go with the hypostatic properties. Yes, but the essence has no hypostatic property, because the essence is common. The hypostatic properties are the characteristics of the hypostases. Then, within the properties, there are the manners of existence of the hypostases.

So what is the cause of their existence? The Father is without cause. The Word is caused and begotten, and the Holy Spirit is caused and proceeding. The essence does not have a cause of existence. As the Father is without a cause, so the essence too is without a cause."

"The manner of existence of the three hypostases is not the essence; it is the Father. The essence does not exist in three ways. The essence is not the Persons."

"'Manner of existence' in the Fathers means the manner in which something that has a cause of its existence comes into being. The three Persons cannot be manners of existence of the essence. The essence does not have manners of existence; the hypostases do. When we speak about manners of existence, it is the hypostases that have a manner of existence. The essence does not have a manner of existence. It is not included in the unbegottenness, begottenness and procession.

The Father gives everything that He has to the Holy Spirit and the Son. Whatever the Word has, He has from the Father. Whatever the Holy Spirit has, He has from the Father, and the Son has the same. What they do not have from the Father is Their hypostasis. They have essence and energy from the Father, but They do not have hypostasis from the Father. They have Their own hypostasis with the Father as the cause."

Some people assert that the Person-hypostasis is the manner of existence of the essence, but this is incorrect. This view is reminiscent of Sabellianism, because the precise definition is that the manner of existence is the hypostatic properties of the Persons.

"I have never encountered the term 'manner of existence of the essence'. 'Manner of existence' has a specific meaning and refers

only to the hypostases, not to the essence. Manners of existence go with the hypostatic properties."

d) The Son and the Holy Spirit Co-essential with the Father

The God-seers, as is clear from Holy Scripture, did not speak about the Son and the Holy Spirit being co-essential with the Father. They said what they saw from experience: that the Word and the Holy Spirit have the same glory as the Father. This is clear from the call of the first Disciples, as John the Evangelist describes.

"The two Disciples went to Christ and asked Him to show them where He was staying. Certainly, when Christ spent a whole day showing them where He was staying this does not mean that He was showed them His apartment, whether it had a kitchen, heating and so on. The place where Christ dwells is the place where God dwells.

What did Christ spend a whole day revealing to them? His dwelling-place. And what is His dwelling-place? The uncreated glory of the Father. This is the dwelling-place of the Word. The Word and the Father dwell in the uncreated glory and rule (*vasileia*)."

"Afterwards we have a manifestation of glory on Mount Tabor, where the three chosen Disciples of Christ saw the glory and rule (*vasileia*) of Christ. This revelation is a revelation of the divinity of Christ, because according to the Fathers, the glory of God at the Transfiguration is the divinity that is revealed.

This means that Christ does not reveal His divinity in words, in such a way that we have the dogma of the Holy Trinity in Holy Scripture. Christ did not say to His Disciples: 'Children, now I shall teach you the truth and you will say: I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker... ". Instead He showed the Apostles His uncreated glory. And not only that He is the bearer of uncreated glory but that He is also the source of uncreated glory. Thus God is revealed to man through this experience of revelation, which we call glorification in the Orthodox tradition."

The terminology 'co-essential' (*homoousios*), 'hypostasis' and 'essence' is of later origin, when the Fathers expressed their experience

in the terms of their era. In this way ineffable words were translated into created words and concepts.

> "In Holy Scripture there is certainly no such thing; there is no 'co-essential' (*homoousios*), nor three 'hypostases', nor 'one essence', nor does it say anywhere that Christ is uncreated God and the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. In this clearly expressed form such teaching on the Holy Trinity does not exist anywhere in the New Testament."

The basic teaching of the holy Fathers is that there is no likeness between uncreated and created. When the saints reached the experience of divine vision, they saw that the glory-light of the Word was like the glory of the Father. For that reason, in the beginning, St Athanasios the Great spoke about the Son-Word being 'of like essence' (*homo**i**ousios**) with the Father. He has, that is, the same or like essence and glory as the Father. As the essence of the Father is uncreated, it follows that the essence of the Word is also uncreated. When, however, the term 'of like essence' was erroneously rendered as 'similar' (*paromoios*), the Fathers created the term 'co-essential' (*homoousios*), meaning 'identical in essence' (*tautousios*), but not meaning 'identical in hypostasis'.

> "Why was there so much difficulty concerning the term 'co-essential' (*homoousios*)? Because not only the Arians rejected 'co-essential', but in the beginning the Orthodox rejected it as well. The 'hom**oi**ousians', that is to say, those who said 'like in every respect', were Orthodox. That is why St Athanasios the Great says clearly that the people who shouted and said 'of like essence' (*homoiousios*), that the Word is like the Father in every respect, are Orthodox. And that is what we mean, he says, by the term 'co-essential' (*homoousios*).
>
> [The Word] is not co-essential in the sense of identity of essence (that the Word and the Father are one). For Athanasios 'co-essential' (*homoousios*) does not mean 'identical in essence' (*tautousios*). It has

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* In an attempt to avoid confusion between *homoousios* (co-essential, of one essence) and *homoiousios* (of like or similar essence) the '***oi***' in the middle of *homoiousios* is printed in bold type. The advocates of these two terms are distinguished in the same way – *homoousian***s** and *homoiousian***s** – Translator's note

the same meaning as 'of like essence' (*homoiousios*) for Athanasios. Why? Because the basic dogma of the Fathers of the Church is that there is no likeness at all between what is created and what is uncreated. So when you say 'like in every respect,' this signifies uncreated God. This is what the term 'co-essential' (*homoousios*) means.

Contemporary Orthodox theologians have made the hom**oi**ousians into semi-Arians, but they were not at all. They were the fanatical wing of the Orthodox, who said that we cannot speak about God's essence, because the essence of God is nameless, incommunicable and so on. We can only speak about the Persons, the hypostases. According to them, essence and hypostasis mean the same thing.

So who used the term 'co-essential' (*homoousios*)? Originally it was a heretical terminology. The Gnostics, the Gnostic heresies, also used it, but mainly Paul of Samosata. Paul of Samosata says that the Word is co-essential (*homoousios*) with the Father in the sense of 'co-hypostatic'. He has one hypostasis – essence – with the Father and in God there is one hypostasis and one essence. This is what 'identical in essence' (*tautousios*) means.

This being the case, the hom**oi**ousians did not accept the terminology of Athanasios. They fought against it and in the end they were convinced when St Basil the Great explained that 'co-essential' (*homoousios)* does not mean 'identical in essence' (*tautousios*). And provided that 'co-essential' (*homoousios*) does not mean 'identical in essence' (*tautousios*) but means 'of like essence' (*homoiousios*), in the sense that They have one essence together that is not the hypostasis, and that there are three hypostases and that They have the same essence together. This is the sense in which this exposition of the Orthodox doctrine, which had been formulated by the First Ecumenical Council and Athanasios, was made and accepted.

St Athanasios the Great himself declared that this way of speaking about the hypostasis and essence was permissible, and this was expressed in the decision of the Council over which St Athanasios the Great presided in Alexandria in 362."

It is significant that during divine vision 'of like essence' (*homoiou-*

sios) has the same spiritual meaning as 'co-essential' (*homoousios*). 'Co-essential' prevailed simply because it better expressed the dogmatic revelatory truth that the Word is God. Obviously this spiritual concept that 'co-essential' expresses is also the experience of the Apostles and the Prophets in the Old Testament.

> "St Athanasios the Great describes what the 'homoousians' mean by 'co-essential' (*homoousios*). They say that the Word is in every respect like the Father and from the Father. Then he adds that that is also what we mean by 'of like essence' (*homoiousios*). St Athanasios equates 'co-essential' (*homoousios*) with 'of like essence' (*homoiousios*), when it means 'like the Father in every respect and from the essence of the Father'.
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> If this is the significance of *homoiousios*, then the issue is not what contemporary theologians suppose. What, however, is meant by 'like the Father in every respect'? It means that there is no likeness at all between created things and uncreated God. As the Word is like the Father in every respect, He cannot be created. Then they say that He is from the essence of the Father, and they do not say that He is from nothing. This is Orthodoxy. Then, as this is what 'co-essential' (*homoousios*) means, I wonder whether it has any philosophical meaning? It has no link at all with philosophy or with depth psychology.
>
> The conflict between Athanasios and Arius was about whether the Prophets saw the uncreated or created Word. The Orthodox said that they saw the uncreated Word, and the Arians that they saw the created Word.
>
> Consequently, according to the Fathers of the Church, [that the Word and the Father are] co-essential is not a teaching of the Church but a teaching of the Old Testament."

The term 'co-essential' (*homoousios*) cannot be understood rationally, as in reality it means uncreated. It is, however, a means of leading us to the experience of Christ in our lives.

> "When we say that the Word is uncreated can our reason penetrate far enough to comprehend the word 'uncreated'? Uncreated is simply negative. It means 'not created'. Well, we can know created things to some extent with our reason. But can anyone know what

is uncreated by means of reason? No. Because what is uncreated surpasses human reason.

That is why the experience of glorification is not an experience of anything created. It is an experience of the uncreated. And there is no similarity between uncreated and created. So is the aim of the term 'co-essential' (*homoousios*) to convey understanding? No."

The word 'God' itself cannot 'convey understanding', but it is a name to lead us to experience God.

"The essence of the Old and New Testaments is that God can never be identified with created concepts. For that reason man uses created concepts in order to pass through the stages of purification and illumination and reach glorification. Then he has knowledge that is also unknowing, because it surpasses knowledge and goes beyond the categories of things perceptible to the nous. God is no longer a concept. God is never a concept."

This term 'co-essential' (*homoousios*) that the Fathers used about the Word against the Arians was not actually a teaching of the Fathers of the Church, but a teaching of the Old Testament Prophets, as was stated previously.

"If you read the argument between the Arians and the Orthodox carefully, and then between the Eunomians and the Orthodox, you will see that the Orthodox, the Arians and the Eunomians all say that the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, of the Father and the Son, clearly exists in the Old Testament.

When the Orthodox were disputing with the heretics, they used arguments from the Old and New Testaments indiscriminately. The major arguments about whether the Word was uncreated or created are taken from the Old Testament rather than the New Testament. This is because the Old Testament is clearer on the dogma of the Holy Trinity than the New Testament.

The Orthodox theologians no longer see this, because they work on theology in the same way as Westerners do. That is the problem."

In Augustine we find a different perception of this subject. He does not theologise about the Holy Trinity on the basis of the experience of the God-seers, but on the basis of philosophical principles and conjecture.

"Christ of the New Testament is the Angel of the Old Testament. This is the unanimous teaching of all the Fathers, with the exception of Augustine, who is the only one who does not follow this line.

For that reason, when Augustine theologises about the Holy Trinity, he does so in a philosophical and speculative way. He has an idea in his head about the Holy Trinity which has no connection with the Old Testament. Certainly he bears the New Testament in mind, Christ in the New Testament, the incarnate Word. But he does not see the Word in the Old Testament as the Fathers of the Church see the Word. He devoted himself to conjectures based on the *Enneads* of Plotinus. That is actually what he had in mind. For that reason all his thoughts run in parallel with the *Enneads* of Plotinus."

The term co-essential (*homoousios*) applies to Christ in two respects by reason of the incarnation. He is co-essential with the Father, according to His divine nature, and He is co-essential with us, according to His human nature.

"He was born of the Virgin and became co-essential (*homoousios*) with us, according to His humanity, so Christ is co-essential in two ways. Christ is co-essential with the Father according to His divinity and co-essential with us according to His humanity. So anyone who says '*homoousios* and *homoousios*' is Orthodox. Christ has two essences: uncreated and created."

Whatever the Father has as regards essence and energy, the Holy Spirit also has, so not only the Son is co-essential (*homoousios*) with the Father, but the Holy Spirit is also co-essential (*homoousios*) with the Father. The three Persons are co-essential, but not identical in hypostasis, because They are different as regards hypostases and hypostatic properties. In any case, as we have already seen, the essence is not identical with the hypostatic properties or the manners of existence (unbegottenness, begottenness, procession). This teaching is empirical knowledge. When someone reaches divine vision he acquires personal knowledge of it. So all those who assert that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son with regard to manner of existence, regard the Holy Spirit as inferior and confuse the hypostatic properties of the Persons of the Holy Trinity.

In the earliest Fathers, both Eastern and Western, in the united Roman Empire, there is no difference in the theological expression of revelatory experience. They knew that the essential sending forth (mission), or the sending forth according to energy, that is done by the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit is Orthodox teaching, because it shows the identity of essence between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. However, the manner of existence of the Son and of the Holy Spirit originates only from the Father, as the Father is the Begetter of the Son and the 'Projector' of the Holy Spirit. The manner of existence of the Persons is not confused with essential mission according to energy.

The holy Fathers teach that the Holy Spirit proceeds **only** from the Father and is sent from the Father through the Son. The Fathers of the Church knew this difference from their experience. As they were aware of what they knew and what they did not know, they did not philosophise or speculate, as we see happening in the West, particularly after the 8th century.

> "When we read the early Romans of the West we see that there was an Orthodoxy that differed in no way at all from Orthodoxy in the East. There was absolutely no difference: the same purification, the same illumination, the same glorification, the same lives of the saints, the same theology and there was no sense that any difference existed. No dispute ever arose between Romans on the subject of the *filioque* (in the early centuries). On one occasion only history records that there was a misunderstanding in which Maximos the Confessor intervened, and Maximos the Confessor undertook to interpret to the East Romans what the West Romans meant by the *filioque*.
>
> And he clearly explains to us that in Latin the word 'procession' (*procedere*) has two meanings. When it signifies essential energy or essential sending forth (mission), which shows the identity of essence between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, then the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. This is on the level of essence, that is to say, of essential energy. Translated into the Cappadocian Greek of the Cappadocian Fathers, this means that the Father communicates His essence together with the natural energy to the Son, and through the Son to the Holy Spirit. So the

Holy Spirit receives His essence and essential energy, the natural energy of the essence, from the Father and the Son. It means no more than that. In this context, when the word 'procession' is used in this way, 'procession' does not signify manner of existence. It means essential mission.

Now I must intervene here and draw your attention to something – remind me to do the same in the general class. You must stop thinking about this sending forth as 'temporal mission' as some people call it. I do not use such expressions. This is not 'temporal mission', because when the Father communicates His essence to the Spirit through the Son, it is in no way a 'temporal mission'. Is it 'in time' that He sends forth His essence to the Holy Spirit as well? That is absurd! It is not the sending of the Holy Spirit in time; it is the sharing and communicating of the essence and essential energy from the Father to the Spirit – 'through' the Son, we say in Greek, in Latin they also say 'from' the Son, but we mean absolutely the same thing. But this does not signify the manner of existence.

Maximos the Confessor gives us this interpretation. He says that, when it means sending forth (mission), and it is clear from the context that essential mission, not 'temporal mission', is signified, then the Spirit proceeds from the Father and from the Son, and this is as Orthodox as can be. But when the term 'procession' is used as the manner of existence, then the Son is not the cause or the co-cause of the existence of the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit has His existence only from the Father. Here there can be no *filioque*.

In Latin '*procedere*', 'procession', is used in both instances. Thus '*procedere*-procession' has two meanings. In the East, however, the Greek word for 'procession' (*ekporeusis*) only has the meaning of the manner of existence. Instead of the second meaning of '*procedere*-procession', there are other Greek words denoting 'communion', 'communication', 'radiating', and any number of other terms that can be found by reading the Fathers of the Church. The prevailing terminology, at least among the Cappadocians, is 'communion'."

The fact is that St Maximos, referring to the phrase of the then Pope, St Martin (649-655) – because some people from Constantinople

had raised objections – "The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son as well" – explains that he was not referring to 'procession' (*ekporeusis*) but to 'going forth'. He writes that the West Romans produced supporting evidence from Roman Fathers and from St Cyril of Alexandria with which they proved that "They are not making the Son the cause of the Spirit", as they know that the one cause of the Son and the Spirit is the Father, Who is the cause of the Son by generation and of the Holy Spirit by procession. However, they say it in order to show that the Holy Spirit goes forth from the Father through the Son, and in order to show "the unity and immutability of the essence".

Elsewhere St Maximos the Confessor writes, "As the Holy Spirit is by nature according to essence of God the Father, thus He is also by nature according to essence of the Son, as He proceeds essentially from the Father, through the Son Who was begotten inexpressibly."

> "St Maximos uses the Greek term 'to go forth' and the West Roman, Latin-speaking Anastasios the Librarian uses the term '*missio*' (mission). Both prove that the Roman '*procedere*-procession' has two meanings, one relating to 'cause' and the other to 'mission'. When it is used in the sense of 'cause', as in the Creed, the Holy Spirit proceeds only from the Father. When it is used in the sense of 'mission', the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, expressing the co-essentiality of the Son with the Father. All the East Roman Fathers say the same, but they use the Greek term '*ekporeusis*' to express it. No West Roman Father ever said that the Word was the 'co-cause' of the Holy Spirit. This view appears in Latin polemical theology and was officially made a dogma at the Council of Florence."

The Frankish theologians used certain passages from blessed Augustine to reach the point of introducing the *filioque*, asserting that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, and regarding the Father and the Son as the cause of the existence of the Holy Spirit. They imposed this heresy after they had condemned the Seventh Ecumenical Council in 794. In 809 they declared the addition of the *filioque* to the Creed as dogma, and later (1009) they also imposed it on the Church of Rome.

"Augustine and every bishop in the Empire, including those

in Britain, accepted 'one essence – three hypostases', in accordance with the Creed of the Second Ecumenical Council. (After the Second Ecumenical Council) he tried as hard as he could to correct his book *De Trinitate*, which was circulating and causing problems... That is why we find such Cappadocian gems as, 'Most of us who use the Greek language are accustomed to say "One essence, three hypostases" or in Latin "*Unam essentiam tres substantias*"...so that we can reply with a phrase, when we are asked what these three are, and say three hypostases or three persons... so that there will be neither confusion of persons, nor... any inequality. And if this cannot be conceived by our understanding, let it be held by faith.' 'The Son is born from the hypostasis of the Father.'"

Thus there is an Orthodox *filioque* that denotes the sending forth (mission) of the Holy Spirit by the Father and through the Son, and a heretical, non-Orthodox *filioque* that does not denote the sending forth but the manner of existence, the procession (*ekporeusis*) of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son, abolishing the hypostatic properties and regarding the Son too as a cause of the existence of the Holy Spirit.

"Now we turn to the *filioque*. God the Father communicates the essence through the Son. The sharing of the essence and energy is through the Son. In fact, Gregory Palamas says that, if we wish, we can say, 'and from the Son'. It does not matter, provided we are not referring to the manner of existence. There is an Orthodox *filioque* as well.

The heretical *filioque* is heretical because it makes the Word the cause of the existence of the Holy Spirit. This is heresy. The Word is not the joint cause with the Father of the Holy Spirit's existence. The Father, however, communicates His essence simultaneously to the Word and through the Word to the Spirit.

This is what we mean when we say that all God's energies act 'from the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit'. There is no problem with regard to the energy, because this is how the Fathers speak: the energy comes from the Father, through the Son in the Holy Spirit. It is from the Father, through the Son and rests in the Spirit. Thus the Word too is manifested in the Father to the Spirit, as regards energy. There is manifestation and communica-

tion. Certainly, as I see it, this is a way of speaking but not of understanding."

Summing up, in the Triune God there is no identity of Persons, as each Person has the incommunicable personal characteristic, the manner of existence (unbegottenness, begottenness, procession). There is, however, absolute identity of essence and energy. The dogmatic difference on the subject of the *filioque* did not arise from the Fathers of the East and West, but from the Franks, who used some phrases from blessed Augustine to arrive at the heretical *filioque* and to differentiate themselves from Orthodoxy.

"Where there was a Roman hierarchy there was never a problem over the *filioque*, provided the hierarchy was Roman. Why was there was no tendency to split among the Romans? Firstly because they were united on dogma. Dogmatically. There was one Christianity, one Church. One Church of all the Romans, with five Roman Patriarchates. This is the historical reality. Apart from this, however, there was another reason why the Romans did not want divisions among themselves. It was because the Romans of the West were in servitude and oppressed. And being oppressed, they looked towards Constantinople for help."

3. Created and Uncreated

From what has already been set out it is obvious that God is uncreated whereas the world is created. The word 'uncreated' consists of the negative prefix 'un-' and the word 'created', and denotes something that has not been created, has not been made and is not predetermined. What is uncreated has no beginning, does not perish and has no end, whereas what is created has a created beginning, it is subject to corruption and it has an end, unless God does not want it to have an end.

The saints, during their experience, see the energy-glory of God, which is clearly different from the energy of material things. For example, at midday, when he was on his way to Damascus, the Apostle Paul saw, as he himself relates, *"a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me"* and heard a voice (Acts 26:13-14). He saw Light that was distinct from the created light of the sun.

a) The Difference between Created and Uncreated

The basic teaching of the Fathers of the Church, who have the same experience as the Prophets and the Apostles, is that there is no similarity at all between what is uncreated and what is created, because the whole of creation was created from non-being. It came into existence from non-existence through the creative energy of God, Who is Being. The Son is the Being, Who was born of the Existing Father before all ages and did not originate from non-being, as did the creation. For that reason He is uncreated God.

> "Created things come from non-being and what is from God is uncreated. Is the Word is from the essence of God the Father? He is uncreated. Is the Holy Spirit from God? He is uncreated. Is glory from God? It is uncreated. Is grace from God or not? If it is from God, it is uncreated. These are the most basic categories of patristic thought.

> Something is not uncreated simply because it has no origin. If you look at it from the philosophical point of view, if something has a cause, it must be created, because only God is without a cause."

The Angel of Glory, whom the Prophets saw in the Old Testament, was uncreated and is not depicted, because there is no resemblance between what is created and what is uncreated. The Word, however, is depicted after the Incarnation.

During the experience of glorification the God-seer "knows that the glory is uncreated and the energies are uncreated". It is not possible for someone to reach divine vision, to behold God's glory and to assert that the Word of God is a creature.

> "Arius said that the Word is a creature. But no one can have reached illumination and say such a thing. Because from the experience of glorification one knows that the Word is uncreated: the Word is not from non-being. The Word is from the Father. Created things are from non-being. At the stage of illumination no doubt remains, because the teacher of the one who is illuminated has actually taught him this.
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> Anyone who arrives at glorification, however, knows from his own experience that the Word is uncreated, that the glory is uncreated, that the Father is uncreated, the Spirit is uncreated, the Spirit is a hypostasis, and so on. From then on these things are part of empirical theology."

The term 'co-essential' (*homoousios*), which was used to convey that the Word has the same essence as the Father, is a rendition of the uncreated reality that the Prophets saw in the Old Testament.

Even the term 'co-essential' (*homoousios*), however, cannot be understood rationally and philosophically, because it too is essentially identified with what is uncreated. It signifies something that is not created. We comprehend the created world rationally, but we do not know the essence of God, in which we cannot participate, so we describe it as uncreated, not created.

> "'Co-essential (*homoousios*) with the Father' is what we say. This cannot be understood philosophically. No one can penetrate into the meaning. What does 'co-essential' signify? 'Co-essential'

means 'uncreated'. It means nothing more than that. Co-essential equals uncreated. When we say that the Word is co-essential with the Father, it means that the Word is uncreated, as the Father is uncreated. That is all it means."

The word 'uncreated' means 'not created', so it is inaccessible to rational understanding.

"The term 'co-essential' (*homoousios*) never conveys understanding. Just as the word 'God' does not convey understanding. But is the aim of these terms that are used, the words and concepts in the Old and New Testaments, to provide us with a means of knowing God through our rational faculty, or through glorification? What is the purpose of the words? Is it to lead us to rational understanding or to guide us to the experience of glorification, which transcends reason?"

Surely the purpose of the words is to lead us to the experience of glorification and not to speculative thinking.

b) The Bridge between Created and Uncreated

Human beings are the created handiwork of uncreated God. There is no similarity at all between what is created and what is uncreated. In fact there is an immense difference between them.

"What is uncreated is completely inconceivable. There is no similarity at all between uncreated and uncreated things. The human mind works within material time and space. Human reason belongs in the realm of what is created and human reason and reasoning cannot go beyond the bounds of visible things. The nous has the power to come into communion directly with God through the resurrection of the nous and constant remembrance of God, which is a prayer: 'Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy,' which is expanded to become, 'Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me a sinner.' The nous prays and the reason works rationally. Neither the one nor the other can overcome the issue of time. Even the realm of 'ages' in which the angels belong, is incomprehensible for man, how much more so that which is beyond all ages, where God is."

In spite of the difference between uncreated and created, man arrives at the point of participating in the uncreated glory and energy of God, of being united with it and acquiring spiritual knowledge of God. How this comes about is amazing. The bridge that unites what is created and what is uncreated is the grace of God.

The philosophers spoke about physical and metaphysical things, and asserted that human reason could understand metaphysical things. According to the Fathers, however, human beings can understand created things with their rational faculty, whereas knowledge of uncreated reality is a gift from God and comes about through the "uncreated, self-revealing eye of God", in other words, through the uncreated glory-energy of God, as it says in the Psalms: *"In Your light we shall see light"* (Ps. 35[36]:10).

> "As there is no similarity between God and created things, what is the bridge between the creation and what is uncreated, given that what is uncreated does not resemble what is created? What is the bridge?
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> In classical philosophical epistemology from the ancient Greek philosophers up until Kant and more recent times, the bridge between created and uncreated for those who distinguish between them – because it is usually a Muslim or Christian distinction, as other religions do not make this distinction between created and uncreated – the bridge is human reason, as it was believed that man's rational faculty was created in such a way that it could understand metaphysical, uncreated things. Philosophers identified 'uncreated' with 'metaphysical'. The bridge is man's reason; whether by means of natural revelation or not, the rational faculty understands. When reason finds itself unable to grasp something, it comes as a gift of supernatural revelation and once again, man understands through faith. In the first case he understands through faith, rationally. So reason understands either through faith or through the rational method. One sort of knowledge completes the other.
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> In the patristic tradition, however there is no bridge. Or rather, there is a bridge between created and uncreated things, but the bridge is itself uncreated. Someone who does not have the uncreated 'self-revealing' eye of God, by means of which God sees Him-

self, cannot see what is uncreated. That is why, according to the Fathers' interpretation, the phrase *"In Your light we shall see light"* means that within the uncreated Light we shall see the uncreated Light. That is to say, anyone who is not within the Light does not see the Light."

In the Old Testament, through the glory of God, the Prophets attained to theoria of the unincarnate Word. In the New Testament the glorified, through the same uncreated glory, saw the divinity of the Word. The divine nature and the human nature were united hypostatically in the incarnate Word. Therefore, in His Person, the uncreated was united with the created, the impassible with the passible, the immortal with the mortal.

It is not the philosophers and speculative thinkers who constitute the epistemological bridge for experiencing God, but the glorified. And it is not human knowledge that acts within the glorified but the grace of God. Of course, this is due to the existence of the God-man Christ, in Whom the divine and human natures were united hypostatically.

c) Theoria (Vision) of the Uncreated Glory of the Holy Trinity

Knowledge of the Holy Trinity is gained through the energy of God that enables us to see Him. The glorified acquire personal experience of the fact that the energy of the glory of the Holy Trinity is uncreated.

> "When someone who is glorified beholds the Holy Trinity, he knows that the glory is also uncreated... All these things come from the experience of glorification."

The theoria of the uncreated Light by the glorified is free from error. It is true, nothing false can slip in, and the God-seer does not go wrong. By means of the "uncreated, self-revealing eye of God" the God-seer distinguishes the uncreated Light from the created light of the sun, but also from the created light of the devil, who sometimes *"transforms himself into an angel of light"* (2 Cor. 11:14).

There are clear differences between uncreated and created light, as "those initiated by experience" confirm.

"The uncreated Light is without shape, structure or form, so it is said to be amorphous, shapeless and formless. This is a blow against Plato, who believed that man must know the forms, the immutable forms. This terminology is an attack on Plato. When the Fathers say that the glory of God is without form, it means that Plato's forms do not exist. That is why we say that this terminology is an attack on Plato. The same applies to 'shapeless' and so on."

After the incarnation of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, the revelation of God takes place in the human nature of the Word. Thus the human nature of Christ also becomes a source of the uncreated energy of God, but what is manifested in Christ is the uncreated glory of His divinity. The Disciples of Christ were counted worthy on various occasions to see the uncreated glory of His divinity in the human nature of the Word. This revelation comes about in two ways: through miracles and through the manifestation of the glory and rule (*vasileia*) of God on Tabor and at Pentecost. This subject will be discussed later, in the chapter on the incarnation of the Word.

From what has been set out above, it is clear that the Triune God exists, not because the philosophers told us so, nor because we can acquire logical proofs about Him, but because the Prophets, Apostles and Fathers were accounted worthy of seeing His glory, His glory and rule (*vasileia*), His Light in the unincarnate Word of the Old Testament and in the incarnate Word of the New Testament.

The terms 'hypostasis', 'essence', 'energy', 'co-essential' (*homoousios*), 'manner of existence' and 'uncreated' are a formulation of the experience of the glorified. They are neither philosophical terms nor conjectures, but words and concepts which articulate, as far as this is possible in human language, the experience of seeing God, in order to lead people to participation in the glory of God. No one who uses these terms for speculative philosophical thinking can acquire genuine, pure knowledge of the uncreated glory of the Triune God.

Part 2

The Creation of the World

The Creation of the World

The classical teaching of the Fathers of the Church, as formulated by St Athanasios the Great, is that "The Father makes everything through the Son in the Holy Spirit". Creating the universe is the shared action (energy) of the Triune God. The creation is neither self-existent nor the product of chance, but a creation of the Triune God.

The creation includes angels, demons, the material world and humankind. They were all created by God in different ways. God brought them into existence from non-existence, from non-being into being.

In the pages that follow we shall look at various aspects of this truth from the experience of the saints of the Church.

1. The Creation of the Universe

In the beginning God created the invisible world, the noetic spirits, in other words, the angels. Then He made the world perceptible to the senses, the whole material creation, and finally, as the culmination, He made man, who is made up of invisible and visible elements. Thus humankind is the summary of the whole creation.

a) God the Creator

In the previous chapter a distinction was made between God's essence and energy and between 'uncreated' and 'created'. These two theological distinctions are of major importance with regard to the creation of the universe. The distinction between God's essence and energy shows that the Persons of the Holy Trinity are united with one another according to essence, whereas the whole creation participates in different ways in God's energy.

It follows from this doctrine that God is not Creator according to essence, but according to energy and according to will. This means that "God could have not created the world, because the world adds nothing to God, and for that reason God is free. He does not act out of necessity."

Consequently both the essence and the energy of God are uncreated and are different from the created essence and energy of created things. The God-seers' knowledge of both these realities (essence-energy, uncreated-created) in God's relationship with the world comes from experience, not from philosophy or speculation. During their experience, as has been mentioned already, the saints who beheld God knew that they were participating in the energy of God, not in His essence. Thus they preached that God is Creator according to energy and will. He provides for the world and communicates with it through His uncreated energies.

Those who behold God also know from experience that "All created things originate from non-being."

> "What is created originates from non-being, whereas what is uncreated is not a creation. It always existed and will always exist."

The world was not made as a copy of the archetypal ideas that existed in God, as Platonic teaching held, but was created by God without created means. This too is a matter of experience for the God-seeing saints.

> "From the experience of glorification or vision of God, the Prophets, Apostles and saints know that there is no similarity at all between what is uncreated and what is created. This means that created things are not copies of uncreated archetypes and types. Creation is unique as a construction in itself, just as what is uncreated is unique in itself. This means that, if universal concepts exist, they do not apply in any case to the uncreated dimension of existence."

God made the whole creation "according to His will," that is to say, willingly. Nothing happens to (or is done by) God out of necessity, which would remove His freedom. God is not subject to the Aristotelian principle of 'entelechy' concerning the progress from 'potentiality' to 'actuality', in accordance with which God needed to create the world, in order that the immutable might be made perfect, changing from potentiality into actuality. According to this mistaken perception, God "was imperfect, because in order to become perfect He created the world, as He needed the world in order to be perfected."

The world was created by God 'from non-existent matter', that is 'from non-being'. This teaching overturns the Platonic perception that the world is a copy of the ideas.

> "All created things come from nothing."

These words, "from nothing", which we encounter in the writings of St Maximos the Confessor, are rendered by the phrase "from non-being". As a result of modern existential philosophy, 'nothing' is regarded as an ontological principle, so "from nothing" is better interpreted and understood by using the phrase "from non-being". This is said to distinguish the creation of the world from the generation of the Word and the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father.

"Uncreated things exist always and do not have a beginning or end. And all created things come from nothing according to God's will. Nothing created comes from God. Only the Son, the Spirit, the energies and so on come from God. Everything from God is uncreated. Created things are from nothing. This category of patristic thought is very important."

The discussion about the world being created "from non-being" is also linked with confronting the Arian heresy, because Arius asserted that the Word was the first creation, the first thing that God made. Then an answer was needed to the question of what the difference was between the begetting of the Word by the Father and the creation of the world by God.

"What was the issue for Athanasios? Where did the Son come from? Is He from the Father, from the essence of the Father, from the hypostasis of the Father or from non-being? This is the one criterion of Orthodoxy.

Then, if the Son is from non-being, this is the Arian heresy. If He is from the Father, He is not a creation, because everything created comes from non-being. Anything that does not come from non-being is uncreated. It is impossible for something to be created that is not from non-being, because God made everything out of non-being. Created things are from non-being and whatever is from God is uncreated."

This is the general teaching of the Fathers of the Church.

"For the Fathers, whatever comes out nothing is created and everything uncreated is from the Father. So the Word is from the Father and uncreated, and the Spirit is from the Father and uncreated, whereas whatever is from nothing is created."

This teaching of the holy Fathers is not theoretical, conjectural or philosophical but purely empirical. The holy Fathers know these dogmas about the creation of the world from nothing and about the meaning of 'created' and 'uncreated' from their experience, because when they reached the point of revelation they saw the difference between the Word and creation, between uncreated glory and the energy of created things. They had this experience even before this teaching

was recorded in Holy Scripture, as "the Patriarchs existed before the written texts of the Old Testament".

> "Anyone who has reached glorification knows about the creation of the world, because he sees then what comes from the Father and what comes from non-being. He sees the Persons of the Word and the Holy Spirit, Who originate from the Father through generation and procession, and he sees those who originate from non-being, but who depend on the will of God. Whatever originates and has its existence from the Father and not from non-being is uncreated, whereas anything that originates from non-being is created."

b) Created Things

God's creation is divided into visible and invisible. The whole universe is visible. The angels are invisible.

> "All created things made by God are material and divided into visible and invisible. Those that are invisible are called bodiless, because they are invisible."

Relative similarity and relative dissimilarity exists between created things. "The basis of created human knowledge is similarity and difference." This rule makes it possible for things to be described and classified. In all created things "relative similarity and difference exists".

The similarity consists in the essence, but also in the construction of every creature. All created things have the same essence, which in philosophy is called "'matter', whereas in theological language it is called 'dust', 'ground', 'clay' or 'earth'". Also, all material things are alike in their structure. "All material bodies consist of atoms that are relatively similar to one another."

Apart from the similarity, all created things also have differences. The dissimilarity consists in "whether this universal essence is present in the form of physical energy, or in its concentrated form of matter, as well as in the composition of the structural atoms of material creatures."

We see the relative similarity and dissimilarity between irrational living organisms and human beings, between angels and men, between angels and demons. All creatures originated 'from non-being' and are

created, but all participate in various ways in the uncreated energy of God. Thus there is relative similarity and relative dissimilarity between everything created.

Whereas this is true of created things, between God and created things "there is absolutely no similarity". The teaching of St Maximos the Confessor is characteristic: "There is an infinite distance and difference between what is uncreated and what is created."

What the glorified taught about the connection and difference between created things and about the absolute dissimilarity between created things and God is not philosophical but empirical. When the saints arrive at the experience of God they see His sustaining and providential energy in creation, which can be clearly differentiated from matter. However, they also see His glory, which is very markedly different from anything created. The first is what is called 'natural theoria (vision) of the creation', the second is theoria of the glory of God in the Light, when even this creation is transcended.

A distinction is also made in the patristic tradition between 'eternity', 'age' (*aiōn*, aeon) and 'time'. The Triune God is eternal. The angels and saints belong to the ages without end, and the whole of creation, including man, lives in time. This distinction is not philosophical. It is an empirical and revelational experience of the God-seeing saints.

The saints developed this teaching in order to underline the truth that the Word is not connected with time. No time exists between the Father and the Word, nor is He linked with the ages. The Word is co-eternal with the Father. It is in this sense that they declared in the Creed that the Word was begotten of the Father "before all ages".

> "The Fathers make a distinction between *ages* and *time*. Time and age are not the same thing. Time means solar time. In other words, the year, the months, weeks and days. Ages, according to the Fathers, are the entire interval occupied by the creation in the entire universe. Time is the dimension in which the creation exists. Dimension means the place where the creation is, whereas time is the succession of months, days and so on. In addition, the time of the angels is in the ages without end, as angels are not restricted by matter."

We shall look at these points in more detail later.

c) The Purpose of Creation

The question of why God created the world can be answered in many ways. One answer, which we discover in patristic teaching, is that the world was created for the incarnation of the Word.

This does not mean that the incarnation was essential as a 'theological' act to make God perfect, but that, as God was Creator according to His will and was going to create the world, as we shall see below in connection with the inner principles (*logoi*) of things, the specific world came into being for the purpose of the incarnation.

> "The incarnation did not come about for salvation. The incarnation was decided upon and for that reason the world was created, and the Fall and salvation intervened. Salvation is not the essence of the incarnation and the creation. Many Fathers say this.
>
> St Nicodemos of the Holy Mountain writes excellently on this subject in his *Handbook of Spiritual Counsel*. He writes there in a chapter about the Theotokos, and he says it very well. It is all taken from the Fathers of the Church."

There is, of course, a difference between the creation of the world and the perfection of man.

> "The purpose of the creation is the incarnation, according to the Fathers. Man was made for glorification."

Glorification, however, would not have been within man's reach if that Person had not existed in Whom the divine and human natures were united and Who would become the prototype for the glorification of man. We are referring to the God-man Christ.

d) The Energy of God in Nature

The Church has two fundamental doctrines with regard to the creation. The first is that God created the universe out of non-being and not from allegedly pre-existing ideas. The second is that God governs, maintains and provides for the creation through His uncreated energy and not by means of created laws.

The energy of God is single, but it is differentiated into many energies according to its results, namely: existence-bestowing, life-giving, wisdom-imparting or glorifying, just as there is the creative, sustaining, providential and glorifying energy of God. The entire creation participates to varying extents in God's energy. At this point, when mentioning the energy of God in creation, we shall refer to the creative energy of God but not to His glorifying energy, in which the angels and saints share, as we shall see later.

"All things participate in the creative energy of God, but not in His glorifying energy."

Only the angels and saints participate in the glorifying energy of God. The creative and sustaining energy of God exists in creation.

"*Creative* means that it brings into existence, *sustaining* means that it maintains: in other words, maintenance. Like the plumber who comes to your house and maintains the pipes."

In the universe there are no so-called natural laws, which God is alleged to have put into creation before abandoning it. Instead there are natural inner principles (*logoi*), which are the uncreated energy of God. Christ referred to this when He said of the birds of the air that *"the heavenly Father feeds them"*, when He said of the lilies of the field that the heavenly Father arrays them, and of man, that God is personally interested in him (Matt. 6:26-33). Other words of Christ that refer to this issue are: *"My Father has been working until now, and I have been working"* (John 5:17). The introductory psalm at Vespers (103 [104]) also contains many phrases that show God's personal intervention in the world: *"You are He who sends springs into the valley"*, *"You are He who waters the mountains from His higher places"*, *"You are He who causes grass to grow for the cattle..."* and so on.

"The energy of God is everywhere. It is everywhere present and pervades the universe."

Many Fathers, particularly St Maximos the Confessor, when they refer to the sustaining, maintaining energy of God that is present in the whole of creation, mention the inner principles (*logoi*) of things. These 'inner principles of beings' are not the archetypes of the ideas,

as the ancient philosophers asserted, but the creative and sustaining energy of God.

"There is a difference between the Fathers and Augustine on the following point: because Augustine identified the glory of God with Plato's archetypes and Plato's forms, illumination for Augustine was not the unceasing remembrance of God in the heart, but the vision of the archetypes in the essence of God, when someone conceives the archetypes or forms with his brain.

We need to be careful here because sometimes the archetypes are used by the Fathers, but for the Fathers the archetypes are formless: they are not the Platonic forms, whereas for Augustine they are the forms that are identical to the archetypes. Here we have the forms. We have the *rationes* – that is to say, the *rationes* that are the inner principles (*logoi*). The inner principles (*logoi*) are called *rationes* in Latin. Augustine occasionally refers to the *rationes*.

This would be fine if he went no further. This is the teaching of the faith, because we ought to know the inner principles (*logoi*) of things. However, for us these inner principles are not archetypal forms. They are not forms but divine purposes, destinies and so on; they are what God wills. For Plato they are not divine purposes. For Plato they are the originals of which the world is a copy. That is to say, there is a form of man and we are a copy of the idea of man. Yes, but man is not a copy of the inner principles (*logoi*) of beings, because the principles of beings are free from form and have no shape. The principles of beings have no similarity at all with created things in patristic literature."

It is significant that the teaching of the Fathers on the inner principles (*logoi*) of beings is not speculative or rationalistic but empirical, because they had at some time, through the illuminating and glorifying energy of God, reached the point of seeing the sustaining and providential energy of God in creation, a vision that is called natural theoria.

"When someone is in the state of illumination he acquires natural theoria of beings, which means that he sees the uncreated energy of God within creation. He who is illuminated has the energy of God within him and sees the energy of the Holy Spirit in all created things."

Certainly there are degrees of spiritual knowledge, depending on someone's spiritual state.

> "One stage is when you see it through faith. That is to say, you understand the energy of God within creation when you accept the teaching of the saints. The next is when you see the energy of God within creation, when you participate in the illuminating energy of God."

e) Recording the Experience of Revelation

The glorified, all those who participate in the illuminating and glorifying energy of God, such as the Patriarchs and Prophets in the Old Testament before Moses, the Prophet Moses, but also the God-seers after Moses, share the experience of the fact that God communicates with the world through His uncreated energies and that the created world originated from non-being, in contrast with the uncreated Word, Who was begotten of the Father before all ages. This is a matter of experience and not a speculative or imaginary doctrine.

As we have emphasised in another section, this revelational experience is formulated in created words and concepts. The God-seeing Prophets, Apostles and Fathers use the perceptions of the people of their era in order to put their experience into words. Their basic teaching is that God created the world and He directs it, but the formulation of the experience in words comes from the knowledge of the period. The teaching is a matter of theology, the wording is a matter of communication. The cosmology of the Old Testament, as regards expression and formulation, is influenced by the Babylonian cosmology of that age. We stress this to avoid any confusion between the theology of the God-seeing saints and the scientific language of each era.

> "There is a cosmology of the Old Testament. When the Old Testament talks about the firmament, this is Babylonian cosmology. In that period the people of the Middle East observed that, when they dug a well, they found water underground. They saw rain falling from the sky, and often there were floods. If you read the Psalms carefully you will see that there are storehouses up in the sky. You open the door, as in the shower, and water falls down.

Therefore the way they imagined the creation was that in the beginning God created the firmament. The earth was in the middle of the waters and afterwards He suspended the firmament, to support the waters above it, and we have the earth to retain the water below. We are in the middle and live between the waters. This is the cosmology of the Old Testament. Does it bear any relation to reality?"

We also encounter this with regard to the chronology of the existence of the world.

"The cosmology of Genesis shows amazing similarities when compared with Babylonian cosmology. Then there is the chronology of the creation of the world. If we take the Old Testament and reckon when the world was made and when man appeared on earth, we cannot get further than about 6,000 to 6,500 years.

We now know that the universe is much older than 6,500 years, because a few months ago a new star was found that was fifteen billion light-years away from the earth. Our sun is about ninety-four million miles away and it takes about seven minutes for a photon to reach the earth from the sun. A light year is the distance a photon of light travels in a year. If the sun is ninety-four million miles away, imagine the distance that a light year represents. So if we put in fifteen billion light-years, even the computer will have difficulty calculating the numbers involved. In any case, we know that the world is at least fifteen billion years old.

This means that Holy Scripture is completely out as regards the chronology of the universe. The other strange thing is that we do not know what lies beyond. This is what they have found at present, but in a year's time they may find something that is twenty million light-years away, and so on. We do not know how these heavenly bodies originated, or even if they still exist, because the light now arriving started its journey fifteen billion years ago in order to reach the earth. So the distances that exist now in astronomy are amazing.

So from the scientific point of view Holy Scripture seems short of information and does not enlighten us much about the composition of the universe as a whole."

The conflict between theology and science that came about in the Middle Ages resulted from ignorance of the fact that the glorified God-

seeing Prophets, Apostles and Fathers do not get involved in science but express their revelatory experience using the scientific knowledge of their era.

"In the Middle Ages the Europeans had a geocentric perception of the universe. The earth was the centre of the universe and everything revolved round the earth. In the modern era the first astronomers, Galileo in particular, came along and demonstrated with telescopes that instead of the sun revolving around the earth, the earth revolves round the sun. He proved this by observation, not by philosophy. The observations were made with the first telescopes, which he constructed himself. His observation was very simple: he saw that every six months the locations of the spots on the sun moved from one edge of the sun to the other.

He put forward his theories about the sun and the heliocentric system, in contrast to the geocentric system. At that time the rulers and authorities were not convinced, even though bishops looked through his telescope and he explained what his observations meant. In spite of this, he was nearly burnt as a heretic because his theories raised the issue of heresy, and he himself retracted them to show his repentance, in order to avoid execution.

From then onwards the suspicion arose that familiar things in the natural world were not as the theologians described them, but that it could be proved by more careful observation, aided by equipment that man is capable of constructing, that the world was different and could be differently described. We know that the earth is spherical and not a flat slab, which was an opinion that existed in Alexandria but had been forgotten."

This, by extension, also holds true for contemporary science.

"Quantum mechanics finally destroyed the meaning of pure mathematics and it is obvious that no trace remains of the existence of anything immutable in the world. Everything is in continuous motion and no one can trace out beforehand exactly how an electron inside an atom will function. The electron is no longer predestined by the theory of Max Planck. This has been proved now by experiments.

Because of this an Anglican bishop said, 'If we reduce human knowledge to electric pulsations and so on, then it is no longer

knowledge.' Really? Why is it no longer knowledge? This is what he asserted, because he wanted to support an older anthropology belonging to his own tradition.

I answered, 'That is not a problem for us Orthodox. It is not at all difficult for me to accept that knowledge is like that, with electric pulsations.' I also told him: 'With your way of thinking, if the proof of immortality and eternal existence of the soul is mathematics, then with that argument we shall prove that even electronic brains are immortal. They solve the most difficult mathematical problems and much faster than the human mind. As we have taught machines to think, it means that epistemology is not basically the key to the universe.'"

From the theological viewpoint we cannot speak about faith in God from the perspective of the harmony of the universe, but only from the perspective of personal spiritual knowledge.

"I remember that once I was in Geneva and there was a Greek, a specialist in quantum mechanics, who met me in Church and invited me to his house, together with a professor of astronomy from Greece.

The discussion was very strange, because the astronomer seemed to have been influenced by Sunday school in his childhood and kept speaking about the harmony of the universe. And I said, 'I am not sure any more if we can speak about the harmony of the universe. We have black holes now. We have major disorder in the universe and the harmony in the universe is probably only apparent, because man classifies his knowledge and the classification gives the appearance of harmony. It is possible, however, to find many elements in the universe that witness to disorder. Absolute harmony does not exist. There is something that resembles harmony, but there are many other elements that indicate discord. Just as in the past they used to prove the existence of God with arguments from outdated astronomy, that is to say, prior to this century, now someone can prove that God does not exist.'

Afterwards I said that quantum mechanics clearly tells us today that there is nothing immutable, because it has been shown that mathematics itself is an estimate, so we always say 'approximately'.

Every measurement is an approximate measurement. We measure either the momentum approximately, or the position approximately. And best of all, whereas Einstein thought that electrons had an unchanging movement within the atom, it is now proved that the things jump around. So no one can precisely calculate their course mathematically. All calculations by contemporary physicists and so on are done 'approximately'."

Nevertheless, our faith is not affected by the development of science, which investigates the universe and makes new discoveries not referred to in Holy Scripture.

"I went to the baptism of a member of the aristocracy, in an aristocratic family in England. The present Archbishop of Canterbury took us with him to a baptism that a team was going to perform. There was a large reception. The father of the girl must have been one of the most important astronomers in England.

We had a discussion in the lounge. And he, poor man, had suffered a phobia about what the future of the world would be. We had a discussion. What was he afraid of? Now they have found black holes in galaxies, the earth has cracks, so to speak, and the moon – I don't know exactly – is opening up, doing something or other – whereas before we believed in a harmonious universe and we had the harmony of the universe as one of the great arguments for the existence of God. Now we have arguments instead for the non-existence of God, because there is no harmony in the universe. There is serious discord in the universe and it seems as if everything is heading for catastrophe."

The God-seeing Prophets, Apostles and Fathers recorded their spiritual experience so as to guide their disciples to the personal knowledge of the Creator of the world, not in order to teach them scientific knowledge about the world. This is the essential point about Holy Scripture.

"The aim of the divinely inspired concepts is not to reveal anything about the essence of created things and the universe. The whole subject of the positive sciences is related to theology, but theology does not throw light on those other subjects."

"The purpose of the concepts in Holy Scripture is purely ascetic, not scientific. It is not that we should track down from the concepts what matter and the heavenly bodies consist of, and how the structure of the universe functions. This is not the aim of these concepts.

The aim of these concepts is to lead us through asceticism to God: by means of purification and illumination to lead us to glorification. Apart from that, these concepts also aim to make clear to us the relationship between uncreated and created things, so that we know that what is uncreated is from nothing, because the Father is from nothing, the Son is from the Father, the Holy Spirit is from the Father, and the divine energies are from the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit. These are uncreated. And then there is the relationship between the created and the uncreated. Created things are from nothing.

The Fathers know about the relationship between 'created' and 'uncreated' from their experience of glorification. They not only know about the existence of created and uncreated things but about how they interrelate. This does not mean, however, that they know and learn about the essence of God or even about the essence of creatures."

2. The Creation of Angels

The patristic teaching about the difference between *time*, the *age* and *eternity* has already been set out. This teaching is empirical. It is the result of the revelational theoria granted to the glorified saints.

The God-seers, who share in the illuminating and glorifying energies of God, see angels and departed saints in the glory of God and discern another dimension of time. They called this higher level of time the 'age', and differentiated it from the perceptible time of the creation in which they lived before the experience of seeing God, but also from the inapproachable Light in which God dwells, which they called 'eternity'. St Gregory the Theologian says that the age is time that will stop moving, and time is the age that is measured while in motion. What is clear is that the age is another level of time, and is distinct from eternity, which is ascribed to God.

a) Angels of Light

The angels, the noetic spirits created by God, live in the ages. Therefore angels are themselves called 'ages'. The Apostle Paul writes in a characteristic passage: "[God] *has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, Whom He has appointed heir of all things, through Whom also He made the worlds* [in Greek *aiōnas*, literally: 'ages']" (Heb. 1:2).

> "The time of the angels is in the ages without end, as angels are not restricted by matter. Thus angels move in intervals of time that do not resemble our own."
>
> "Man has a slight conception of what time is, but he understands almost nothing about the ages, unless he reaches glorification and has spiritual insight, and sees an angel himself. Then he has experience of an angel."

As angels are creations of God and came from non-being into being,

they have a beginning and are created. The Old Testament speaks in parallel of the uncreated Angel, the Angel of Great Counsel, who is the Word, and of the created angels, who are creations of God.

> "There is an interpretative rule that St Basil the Great expresses very clearly: Wherever the Angel in the Old Testament is called God – because there are different kinds of angels, there are created angels as well – wherever the Angel who appears to the Prophets is called God, He is Christ."

The Apostle Paul sets out the difference between the uncreated Word and created angels:

"For to which of the angels did He ever say: 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You'? And again: 'I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son'? But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: 'Let all the angels of God worship Him.' And of the angels He says: 'Who makes His angels spirits and His ministers a flame of fire.' But to the Son He says: 'Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions'" (Heb. 1:5-9).

The Word of God sits on the right hand of the Father, whereas the angels are ministering spirits who serve: *"But to which of the angels has He ever said: 'Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool'? Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?* (Heb. 1:13-14).

As creatures of God the angels are material beings, but they are of more subtle matter than our own. They are not referred to as immaterial beings, as God is immaterial Spirit, but they are described as 'ethereal beings'.

> "The Fathers of the Church not only say that the soul is corporeal – the soul is material – but so are the angels. Remember that well-known passage from St John of Damascus that says that, compared with visible things, the angels are bodiless. Why do we call the angels bodiless? Because they are invisible. In comparison with God they are dense matter.
>
> So the Fathers do not accept the existence of immaterial things.

Only God is immaterial and immortal by nature; the angels and the soul are not."

Being created is linked with matter and mortality. Only God is by nature uncreated, immaterial and immortal, whereas human beings and angels are by nature created, material and subject to death.

"The Fathers explain that only God is immortal by nature, and man and the angels are not immortal by nature.

The teaching of the Fathers of the Church is, therefore, that the angels are material beings, at least in comparison with God. They are not purely immaterial spirits. This is based on the patristic distinction between 'created' and 'uncreated'. Only what is uncreated is by nature immortal: God Himself, Who is uncreated."

Thus the angels and human souls are 'mortal by nature', but immortal by grace. Because everything that has a beginning also has an end. This does not mean that at some time angels and human beings will cease to exist, as God has willed that they should remain immortal. The angels are also called 'noetic beings', because they have a noetic faculty (energy), but not a rational faculty (*logiki*). Man has both noetic and rational faculties (energies), whereas angels only have a noetic faculty. Man is the summary of creation and God's most perfect creation. For that reason, in order to save humankind and sanctify creation, the Word of God assumed human, not angelic, nature.

"Apart from the rational faculty (energy), the Fathers speak about a noetic faculty (energy). They made a clear distinction, saying that the angels are noetic beings, whereas human beings have reason (*logos*). Man has reason and the angels have nous. So the noetic faculty is different from the rational faculty. The Fathers of the Church continuously make this distinction.

If you want to look in detail at this subject you ought to read Dionysios the Areopagite who, when speaking about human beings, every time he says 'reason' (*logos*) also says 'nous', and every time he says 'nous' also says 'reason'. Reason and nous go together when he speaks about human beings. When he talks about angels, he usually calls them 'noetic beings'. They are 'noetic beings', 'noetic powers'. We are rational beings but also noetic beings, because we have both, whereas the angels are solely noetic."

It is a basic principle of patristic teaching that there are no immutable beings; all things are in motion. Even in the other life there will be no fixed state.

> "St Dionysios believes in eternal motion, that perfection is eternal motion. He rejects immobility. He believes in growth in perfection, that even the Cherubim, the Seraphim, the Powers and all the angels are always ascending from glory to glory in ceaseless upward progress, despite the fact that they are glorified and behold the glory God. In the Platonic tradition, by contrast, perfection is immobility and immutability.
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> In the Greek philosophers we find immutability as the fulfilment of human perfection. Whereas in the Father of the Church who is allegedly the most hellenising and philosophical of them all, we find ceaseless motion as the foundation of glorification."

Even the angels, despite their constant motion, can never attain to knowledge of the essence of God and can never become uncreated. "Not even angels know" the essence of God.

b) Demons of Darkness

Apart from angels there are demons. The Prophets, Apostles and Fathers have experience of this fact and describe the presence of demons. Appearances of demons are described throughout Holy Scripture, and St John the Evangelist actually declares that the purpose of the Christ's incarnation is *"that He might destroy the works of the devil"* (1 John 3:8).

The demons were originally angels, because God did not create evil, but through their pride they fell away from God's glory and became demons. Christ said: *"I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven"* (Luke 10:18).

We shall draw attention to a few points that are relevant to the existence of the demons and their method of warfare.

As creatures of God and spirits, the demons are 'ethereal beings', but on account of their fall they do not participate in the glory of God as Light, so they are dark beings. All creation shares in the creative and sustaining energy of God, and this includes the demons. "Even the

devil has a share in the uncreated energy of God," that is to say, in His uncreated creative and sustaining energy; not in the glorifying energy of God but in the punitive energy.

As a noetic spirit the devil is not bound by time and place, but he is not present everywhere, as is God. He moves at great speed.

> "The devil, for example, moves so quickly that he can bother a million people, so he will be here, there and in China, though without being present everywhere. Because of his immense ability to move he can be both here and elsewhere. His speed of movement is not restricted by matter. So he is not restricted either by our human body or by our dimensions."

God loves the whole creation, but not everyone shares in the same way in this love. It depends on the therapeutic treatment that each one undergoes. The devil, however, cannot be cured, because he generated evil.

> "God loves the devil as well. The devil, however, is not going to be saved. God loves everyone. The issue is not that I shall be saved if God loves me. The issue is whether someone undergoes the treatment necessary to enable him to reach the state of illumination, so that, when he stands in sight of the glory of God, he will see the glory of God as Light and not as everlasting fire and outer darkness."

In the West they believe the opposite.

> "The teaching that Christ loves the devil as well is something that Augustine cannot accept even in his dreams. It is so far from his thoughts."

Certainly this love does not lead to salvation, because it does not meet with a positive and free response. The Fathers have ample knowledge of the existence and energy of the demons from experience. Since they have been freed from the passions and their souls have become subtle, they see both angels and demons.

> "The Fathers are not speculative thinkers. When they speak about theoria they speak with very great precision. They know exactly what they are saying about theology, dogmas and the wiles of the devil..."

The glorified know the demons' thoughts and actions from experience. The Apostle Paul writes: *"For we are not ignorant of his devices"* (2 Cor. 2:11).

"If someone becomes a specialist in the struggle against the devil he is very well aware of how the devil and the demons work."

The devil knew God before the Fall and still sees the glory of God. However, as he is incurable, his nature is darkened and he sees fire. That is why iconographers depict him as dark or black.

"The devil is the greatest 'negative theologian', because he sees the glory of God as darkness and fire."

The devil knows Holy Scripture and interprets it from his own perspective, as we clearly see in the temptations of Christ, when he used scriptural passages in accordance with his own opinions.

"For the Fathers illumination does not mean that someone has studied and knows the Old and New Testaments by heart. The devil also knows the Old and New Testaments by heart. It is not only Christians who know them. The devil can interpret Holy Scripture as much as he likes."

Thus the devil becomes a catechist to those who accept him.

"I think that perhaps the best catechist and the greatest catechumen who existed then – when catechism was simply intellectual and not purification of the heart – was the devil himself."

The devil's warfare against human beings takes many different forms.

"When someone reads the Fathers of the Church he finds there an excellent strategy, according to the devil. Because the devil did not know anything about immutable laws as criteria for legal ethics, truth and so on. The devil did not take account of any laws. He is not someone who wages war as we do today, so to speak. As you know, the Geneva Conventions say that when someone is taken prisoner he must be provided with medical care, that he should eat three times a day, that he should have clean sheets every two to three days and that he should have a pillowcase and not sleep on the floor. And all states have accepted these regulations internationally and war is now waged on the basis of legislation.

Well, before those Conventions, when nations went to war there were no rules. Everyone attacked the enemy as he wished. There were no regulations. The war waged between human beings and the devil is something like that. The devil does not recognise any rule of good behaviour in his conflict with man. For that reason it is extremely difficult for someone to become an Orthodox theologian. Why?

The best guide on this subject is St Symeon the New Theologian, who gives detailed descriptions of these matters. He says that the devil's first concern is without doubt that we should not even hear the name of Christ or anything about the name of Christ. If, contrary to the devil's hopes, we hear something about Christ and it begins to attract our interest, he then changes tactics. Having lost that battle, he has other strongholds. He wages another type of war, because he has another strategy afterwards for someone who has become a catechumen. He teaches him, 'Stop fasting now.' Then he says, 'Your spiritual father gave you this interpretation for that passage, but there is another better interpretation.' The devil begins teaching him how to interpret Holy Scripture and how to teach about the Person of Christ, and he becomes a teacher of Christianity.

If someone progresses from purification to illumination, the devil then begins to introduce his own way of enlightening man. 'Leave that now. It is not the nous that should be illuminated: the rational faculty should be illuminated. Set the nous aside and don't pay much attention to those who say that purification means purification of the nous. Purification means purification of the rational faculty. So you ought to go and study, become highly educated, learn philosophy and so on.'

If someone reaches illumination, the devil has his technique at every level. Even if a monk arrives at glorification he will still try to destroy him then. The Fathers mention examples of glorified people who were brought down. That is why the icon in the *Ladder* of St John Climacus shows a monk at the very top with one foot in Paradise and the devil is dragging him down by the other foot.

I ask the students at the university now, 'Which of you, when you finish your theology degree, will be that kind of theologian?'

Because theology and the troparia of the Church draw a parallel between learning theology and strategy and sport.

In sport, particularly in those days, when someone entered the contest, there were no rules of good behaviour like those that we have now in competitions. Now we have the umpire with his whistle, who calls 'foul', 'out' and so on. In those days sport was like war, without rules of behaviour and without an umpire. And the devil has no umpire, so the Christian is an athlete and a soldier.

When someone is going to become a theologian he really ought to take an interest in strategy and sport rather than philosophy. Generally speaking, he will learn more about the struggle from how the generals wage war than he will learn from philosophers. From all this it is clear that no distinction exists in the Fathers between theologians and spiritual fathers. Theologians are spiritual fathers and spiritual fathers are theologians."

The devil also creates various inspirations and brings thoughts (*logismoi*) or even good feelings.

"There are some people who think that, when they feel well disposed towards someone, for instance, when they see someone who is poor and they feel sympathy for him – these are human feelings. And [they think that] when someone has good feelings, we should say that they are inspired by God. Yes, but good feelings can also be inspired by the devil.

Inspirations come from many different sources. According to patristic tradition the only unerring feeling that can exist in man is when the Holy Spirit prays within him."

"Good feelings can proceed from the devil as well, not only from God."

We can distinguish the faith that is a gift of the Holy Spirit from the faith that comes from the devil.

"Faith saves. But which faith? The faith that the Holy Spirit gives us. Not the faith that we offer to God. Because we offer our own faith; we give God our works, everything. Then God comes and gives these same things back to us through the Holy Spirit, and

from then on they become spiritual and not demonic. A faith that is not spiritual faith has to become spiritual.

A work that is not a spiritual work eventually becomes a demonic work. What was the work of the Pharisee? If the Pharisee were alive today he would be the best Christian in our parishes, the way they have ended up."

Situations that arise within the Church can also be demonic.

"If we have music in Church that provokes demonic feelings, then it is demonic. Not that what provokes erotic love is demonic in itself, but that is not the purpose of the Church. We cannot have romantic relationships with the saints, Christ and the All-Holy Virgin."

The ecstatic states observed among Neoplatonists are demonic.

"For the Fathers of the Church Neoplatonic ecstasy is a reality, but it is a gift from the devil, not from the Holy Spirit. The Fathers emphasise this. For that reason we find the Fathers condemning Neoplatonists and religiosity, because they are overwhelmed by demonic energies. That is why they have those strange experiences. Nowadays, of course, serious people do not concern themselves with Platonic mysticism. There are, however, many religious people in the West who are involved in spirituality in that way.

Thus success in Platonism is a demonic act, for us at least, by our criteria."

Some ascetic acts may be demonic.

"When the Fathers speak about asceticism and self-control, self-control is not only for single people but also for those who are married. That is why we have fasts: so that sometimes we practise self-restraint. Married people also practise self-control, at least by mutual agreement, according to the Apostle Paul's exhortation, because if it is one-sided this abstinence can be dangerous, as St Paul says. The devil has many tricks, so it has to be by agreement."

In addition, "Asceticism that does not make progress and stands still becomes demonic because it eventually leads to pride."

Without a doubt the devil actively attacks people, but he can only produce negative results if they co-operate and respond to the dev-

il's wiles. Someone becomes the devil's victim when he retains evil thoughts (*logismoi*) within himself.

In the extremely varied warfare waged by the devil, man needs to learn to distinguish simple thoughts from complex thoughts, God's energy from demonic energies, and the appearance of God's Light from the devil's light.

"Something that may be considered demonic from the Orthodox standpoint may be considered healthy from another point of view. What Orthodox theology regards as originating from the devil, the newspapers *Apoyevmatini* and *Eleftherotypia* may regard as good for people.

The problem for Orthodox Christians is knowing what the criterion should be."

"Most of all someone needs to learn to distinguish the energies of the devil, so that he can discern which energy influencing him is from God and which energy is from other created things and particularly from the devil.

This ability to discern between created and uncreated energies is the basis of the spiritual gift of discerning spirits. One has to distinguish between the energies of the evil spirit and of the Holy Spirit."

Sometimes the devil *"transforms himself into an angel of light"* (2 Cor. 11:14). Demonic light is different from the Light of God.

"The uncreated Light never comes from outside. It always comes from within. The demon is external and the light of the devil is external. When the devil reveals light to someone it comes from outside."

"When the devil appears to man, he appears in conjunction with him, never merged with him. The created light of the devil cannot merge with man.

For that reason, when the devil appears he always appears with shape and colour, and he is always outside man. It is a light that co-exists, say the Fathers. The devil's light exists alongside man. When it is the uncreated Light, however, it is without shape, form or colour and amorphous, and it is seen through merging.

So someone who is glorified is within the Light and everything

around him is within the Light. And the Light shines from everywhere and the Light is pervasive. The devil's light is limited to one place and is also coloured."

Anyone who has the gift of discernment can immediately perceive delusion and is not deluded. That is why in patristic language the glorified are described as 'unerring', which means that they do not go astray.

Discerning spiritual fathers play an important role on this spiritual journey. In any case, a spiritual father ought to be a theologian, in the charismatic sense of the term, as theology is knowledge of God and whoever acquires this knowledge can discern *"the spirits, whether they are of God"* (1 John 4:1).

"The fact that the spiritual father has noetic prayer signifies that he has the gift of discerning spirits and knows the wiles of the devil beyond all doubt. He knows the energies of the devil with amazing accuracy. He is a spiritual father. But this is Orthodox theology. Consequently this means that the spiritual father is inevitably Orthodox; it is impossible for him not to be Orthodox.

Obviously the spiritual father ought to be a guide, not someone who speculates about these issues. He should have precise knowledge of these matters and guide his spiritual children with precision. If he speculates he is lost and his followers will be lost. This is inevitable. From the patristic point of view this is virtue. This is also why heresy leads people to Hell."

The devil incited Adam and Eve to sin, to disobey God's will, with the result that death came about. This means that the devil, not God, is the creator of death. From that time onwards the devil has dominated man through death. The Apostle Paul, referring to the purpose of Christ's incarnation, when He assumed a mortal body subject to suffering but free from sin, writes: *"He Himself* [Christ] *likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage"* (Heb. 2:14-15).

It is clear that the devil is closely linked with death and dominates man, because through fear of death man lives carnally, he is in the grip of selfish love and acquires the passions of love of praise, love of pleasure and love of money.

"Satan, who is himself the origin of sin, through death and corruption implicates the whole of humankind and creation in sin and death. To be in the power of death, according to the Apostle Paul, is to be a slave to the devil and a sinner, because of the inability of the flesh to live in accordance with the law of God, which is unselfish love."

Christ was victorious over the devil, death and sin through His Cross and Resurrection. As death entered man's body at the instigation of the devil, victory over the devil and death cannot come about through speculations and rational thoughts, only through the Cross, Tomb and Resurrection of Christ.

"It is clear that for the Apostle Paul the bodily Resurrection of Christ is the destruction of the devil, death and corruption. Christ is the first to rise from the dead. If there is no Resurrection there can be no salvation. As death is a consequence of the interruption of communion with God's life and love, and for that reason man and the creation are held captive by the devil, only a real resurrection can destroy the power of the devil. Central to biblical and patristic thought is a Christology of actual union, which depends on biblical teaching about Satan, death, corruption and human destiny. Satan rules by means of death, completely and physically. His defeat has to be complete and physical. The reinstatement of communion ought not to come about only in the realm of the noetic dimension, but more significantly through the creation of which man is an integral part."

Consequently Christians overcome the devil, death and sin when they share in Christ's victory, when they are members of the Church, members of the risen Body of Christ.

"Death is the devil's greatest power and is destroyed within the Body of Christ, where the faithful continuously fight against Satan and struggle to acquire unselfish love. This battle against the devil and this struggle for unselfish love are centred on the collective Eucharistic life of the local parish."

The Christian's struggle is essentially against the devil: inwardly against thoughts (*logismoi*) and passions, and outwardly. This is also the struggle of the Church.

"The Church's struggle is not only inward, namely, that it strives against the devil and temptations to enable everybody to attain to illumination. The Tradition itself continuously comes into conflict with things outside the Church.

But it is difficult to define what these things outside the Church are. An officer in the Emperor's army may not be baptised, and may have one foot inside the Church and the other foot outside.

The boundaries between the Church and the world are not clear for us Orthodox. We cannot accept as Orthodox the view that Augustine expresses in *The City of God* (*De Civitate Dei*), that there is the role of the devil and here is the role of grace. Until we depart to the Lord the devil is with us continuously and struggles to swallow us up."

The Christian must be set free from the energies of the demons. This used to happen during catechism, which is why the catechumen used to learn this art of war against the devil. The Fathers laid down the readings from the Gospel from this perspective. During the period of purification the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke were read. In fact the Gospel of Mark speaks about fighting demonic energies and its dominant theme is purification. This purification took place in the period of Great Lent, through the exorcisms, for candidates for baptism, the catechumens. After baptism, which took place on Great and Holy Saturday, the Gospel of John was read, which pays almost no attention to the devil.

"Salvation for humankind and creation cannot come about by means of a simple act of forgiveness of any legalistic record of sins. Nor can it come about by rendering satisfaction to the devil or to God. Salvation can come about through the destruction of the devil and his power."

Anyone who fights the devil by the power of Christ and overcomes him understands his wiles and becomes a real theologian. Orthodox theology is 'polemical' and it is interpreted by means of 'the art of war'.

"Being a theologian means first and foremost that someone is an expert in the wiles of the devil. Illumination and particularly glorification transmit the gift of discerning spirits so that the devil may

be put to shame, especially when he resorts to teaching theology and spirituality to those who are beginning to slip out of his hands."

Any sort of theology that does not know the wiles of the devil is heretical and under the influence of the devil.

"The enemy of life and death (the devil) can only be destroyed when Christians are able to say with certitude, '*For we are not ignorant of his devices*' (2 Cor. 2:11). Any kind of theology that cannot define precisely the methods and deceptions of the devil is clearly heretical, as such a theology has already been deceived by the devil. That is exactly why the Fathers could affirm that heresy is the work of the devil."

In any case, participation in the glory and rule (*vasileia*) of God depends on warfare against the demons. Otherwise one cannot experience the glory and rule of God.

"The glory and rule (*vasileia*) of God reaches man through the expulsion of demons. We have purification, which is essentially the expulsion of demons. When the demons are driven out the glory and rule of God comes."

It follows that "every saint of the Church represents the triumph of faith over the powers of the devil."

3. The Creation of Man

Man is God's most perfect creature, who came into being on the sixth day of creation, according to the account of Moses the God-seer. He is the summary of the whole of creation, because he is made up of soul and body and has both a noetic element, which is akin to the angels, and a visible element, which is linked with the created world. At the same time, the first human being had the grace and energy of God, that is to say, the spirit, in both elements. Man's two-part being, besides the fact that it is a revelational truth given by God through Moses and Christ, is also the personal experience of the glorified human being.

The account in the book of Genesis describes to us the way in which man was created, but even before the book was written by Moses the God-seer, those who beheld God knew that man was made up of soul and body. For the body they have always had the confirmation of the senses and the fact that it exists in a particular place and time. For the existence of the soul, however, they reached certainty through self-knowledge by grace. They sensed the movement of the soul that activated their bodily powers; they had experience of the energy of the nous in the heart; they knew from experience the advent of the Holy Spirit in the soul but also the withdrawal of God's energy from the soul, at which point it goes through spiritual death.

We shall go on to look at the subject of the creation of man and the function of his psychosomatic being, through the empirical teaching of the Fathers of the Church.

a) The Creation of Man in the Image and Likeness of God

Man is the God's most perfect creature and was created on the sixth day of creation, after the angels and the world. *"Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of heaven, over*

the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that moves on the earth. So God made man; in the image of God He made him; male and female He made them. Then God blessed them..." (Gen. 1:26-28).

The teaching that man in created in the image and likeness of God is fundamental to the whole biblical and patristic tradition, that is, to the teaching of the glorified. The glorified see this truth through their experience in the Holy Spirit.

There is a difference between the expressions *"image of God"* and *"in the image of God"*. The actual image of God the Father is the Word, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, according to the Apostle Paul: *"Christ, Who is the image of God"* (2 Cor. 4:4). *"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation"* (Col. 1:15). Man, who was created by the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit, is in the image of the Word and he must attain to being in His likeness.

> "The Fathers stress that man is not the image of God. Only the Word, the Son, is the identical image of God. The Word is the image of the Father. Because the Word is the image of the Father, Christ (Who became man) is the image of the Father as the Word. However, as a result of the mutual exchange of properties, the incarnate Word, that is to say, Christ's human nature, is also the image of the Father. The human nature of Christ is also the image of the Father by reason of the incarnation.
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> Man is not the image of God. Certainly man is referred to as the image of God, but this is a misuse of the term. Strictly speaking, man is made in the image of God and is not the image of God."

Man was to progress from being in the image of God to being in His likeness, to glorification, by the action of God and his own co-operation. St Irenaeus Bishop of Lyons writes, "By this arrangement, therefore, and this rhythm, and this course, man, a created and formed being, comes to be in the image and likeness of the uncreated God: the Father being well pleased and giving His command; the Son carrying it out and creating; and the Spirit nourishing and increasing; and man gradually making progress, and ascending towards perfection, that is, drawing near to the uncreated One. For He Who is uncreated is perfect, Who is God."

In man there was an 'impetus' to be guided from being in God's image to being in His likeness, again as St Irenaeus says: "Now it was necessary that man should in the first instance be created; and having been created, should grow; and having grown, should reach maturity; and having reached maturity, should multiply; and having multiplied, should be strengthened; and having been strengthened, should be glorified; and being glorified, should see his Lord. For it is God Who is going to be seen, and the vision of God procures immortality."

Man who was created in the image and likeness of God has the breath of life that animated him, but also a life-giving spirit that made him spiritual. St Irenaeus writes: "The breath of life, which rendered man an animated being, is one thing, and the vivifying Spirit, which also caused him to become spiritual, is another... For the breath is temporary, but the Spirit eternal."

Thus a spiritual man is one who has the energy of the Holy Spirit within him.

> "The spiritual man, who is in the image and likeness of God, is not someone who lives with the natural immaterial element of his nature, in other words, the soul, but someone who lives in accordance with the Holy Spirit Who gives him life and makes him incorruptible. Thus he participates in divine immortality."

Man after his creation had a body and a soul, but he also shared in the Holy Spirit.

> "Only that human being who is a temple of the Holy Spirit is the image and likeness of God."

Certainly "the first-formed human beings were created as infants so that they would grow, mature and become perfect in body and soul."

> "The life-giving energy of the Spirit is not given to man automatically and magically. Man's co-operative effort is necessary to enable him to live by faith and love in accordance with his original and final destiny. When, however, man does not follow the Spirit, he is deprived of the life-giving energy of God and becomes merely natural."

The true meaning of the words *"in the image"* and *"in the likeness"* was revealed in full with the incarnation of Christ and is experienced

by the glorified. It is not, therefore, a philosophical and intellectual doctrine.

> "Holy Scripture refers to man being created in the image of God, but what this means was only fully revealed at the incarnation. Man's destiny from the beginning was to become like Christ. He was to become god by grace, to attain to being in the likeness of God. In practice, being in God's image means being like Christ in compassion. Now man, by imitating Christ, becomes an image of the Father by grace, participating in the glory of Christ. Thus when someone reaches glorification and attains to being in the likeness of God, he becomes Christ by grace, that is to say, god by grace."

The anthropology of the holy Fathers depends on the biblical teaching about man being created in the image and likeness of God, not on philosophical teaching about the person. When occasionally the Fathers refer to man as 'person' they mean man in the image of God, and more especially, in the likeness of God.

St Maximos the Confessor says characteristically: "Person is the hypostasis; nature is the essence. The reason (*logos*) is the essence that is 'in the image', but the hypostasis is the manner of life that is 'in the likeness'. Virtue is made up of both." Thus the essence, which is man's reason (*logos*), is in the image of God, whereas the hypostasis, which is the mode of life, glorification, is in His likeness. It is from this perspective that the words of the Apostle Paul ought to be interpreted: *"For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence* [in Greek: *hypostasis*] *steadfast to the end"* (Heb. 3:14).

The first-formed human beings, Adam and Eve, had a soul and a body, but also the grace of the Holy Spirit, which shed grace upon the whole human being. This does not imply that man is made up of three parts, as the Holy Spirit enlightened the soul and the body, so man was spiritual. The glorified know this very well, as they see from experience the difference between natural and spiritual man.

b) The Simultaneous Creation of Body and Soul

It is a fundamental teaching of the Church that the body did not exist before the soul, nor did the soul exist before the body, but soul and

body were created simultaneously. The book of Genesis says: *"Then God formed man out of dust from the ground, and breathed in his face the breath of life; and man became a living soul"* (Gen. 2:7). The formation refers to the body, and the inbreathing – *"the breath of life"* – refers to the soul. The creation of the body was accomplished by the existence-bestowing energy of God, and the creation of the soul was accomplished by the life-giving energy of God. In reality the energy of God is one, but it takes various names depending on the results that it produces.

According to the teaching of the Prophets, Apostles and Fathers, which is the teaching of the Church, the soul was created by God simultaneously with the body and exists together with it until death. Then the two elements separate temporarily until the common resurrection, when the soul and body will again be united, for both the righteous and sinners.

The Manichaeans and Plato had different beliefs on this subject, which influenced Augustine. The Manichaeans introduced the conflict between light and darkness, which was their basic teaching, into the relationship between soul and body.

> "The Manichaeans asserted that man is constituted as he is now as a result of the conflict between the two elements. That is why he is made up of soul and body. The soul is part of the world of light and the body is part of the world of darkness.
>
> From the point of view of epistemology this is important, because man as he is belongs either to the illuminated part of the universe or to the dark part. Of course there was the principle in ancient times that 'like recognises like'. When things are of like kind they know one another. Thus man, who is made up of elements of light and darkness, knows both the light and the darkness. So when someone is initiated into Manichaeism he knows the truth. This is the truth, according to the Manichaeans, and it is extremely simple."

Plato asserted that the soul previously belonged to the uncreated world of ideas and was subsequently enclosed in the body as a punishment.

> "Platonic philosophy is based on the idea that man is made up of soul and body, but the soul originates from the intelligible world and

is not a material soul. It is pure spirit, which is outside matter and time, without dimensions, and is in a state of direct contact with the archetypes. The things in the world are images of these archetypes.

So the object of the soul's knowledge is these archetypes, which are the truth, because according to Plato and Aristotle, the truth is what is immutable. Truth cannot be subject to change. Anything that changes is not the truth. What does not change is the truth in those systems."

This theory was not accepted by the glorified Fathers, because they knew in the Holy Spirit that both the soul and the body are creations of God and, what is more, 'good' creations from the beginning, as God is not responsible for evil. The Fathers have always known that man has self-consciousness, but also consciousness of his surroundings: "Man knows that he is in a body and he is conscious of his environment."

The God-seeing Fathers also know from experience that man has two systems of memory. One is the memory located in the cells, which is linked with the neurological system of man's organism. The other is the spiritual memory system that is linked with the remembrance of God and operates in the soul-heart.

"Now they have found DNA inside the heart of the cell and it is the memory system of each cell. Every cell has its own memory system. So we know that there is a memory system in cells. That is why the cell knows what to do, which genes to turn on, which to turn off, so that one becomes a nose, the other an eye, and so on.

Then we have the memory that is in the neurological system. This is a complete memory system. The whole neurological system is a memory system, a system of communication between the different parts of the body and the brain. It has been proved that the brain itself does mathematics and everything takes place in there. This neurological system with the grey matter is situated up here, and it is a memory system.

I said this to a monk of the Holy Mountain and he said: 'Well, that is all very fine.' And he interrupted me by saying, 'But do they know that there is also a memory in the heart that is the perpetual memory of God; there is a memory system there too, but it does not work: the memory of God?'

While the cells work normally, the grey matter, the rational faculty, works normally, man's adaptation to his environment works well, and his nutrition works more or less, depending on the diet he follows and whether he eats junk food or proper food. However, there is something else that does not function but which exists; it does not work. This thing that exists and does not work is not just a theological issue but a biological, chemical, psychological and psychiatric issue. That is the reason why I believe and why I am Orthodox."

This spiritual memory system is known by experience through noetic prayer and its results. "Someone suffering from melancholy is cured by replacing the chemical link in the synapses inside his brain." In parallel, however, through the energy of the Holy Spirit, a cure takes place in the soul that extends to the body as well. Consequently with noetic prayer in the heart "we have certain phenomena, apart from love: no fear exists in this human being. He remains unaffected to such a degree that his body can go through the worst tortures and yet he does not deny Christ."

This is also obvious from psychological and physical illnesses.

"The most serious illnesses affecting human beings are not bodily ones, which we cure when we go to the doctor and take tablets, aspirins and the like. These are not the serious diseases of humankind. The worst illnesses are those affecting the human personality, which ultimately compel man to wage wars and kill people and steal and tell lies."

The soul acts together with the body, but it is different from it.

"If a way were found for us to change someone's brain and for him still to be the same man, we would then have proof of the existence of the soul, which is not identical to the body. But we are holding on now to see what will happen."

c) The Human Soul

The *"breath of life"* that gives life to the human body from the beginning is closely connected with the body. It animates it and gives it life, welds it together and unites it. The saints acquire experience

of God's inbreathing through prayer, particularly noetic prayer, which warms and moves man's whole inner world.

The classical philosophers also spoke about the human soul: its existence, how it is linked with the body and its existence after death. They too were aware that the soul is different from the body but their views, of course, were completely different from the experience of the God-seeing saints of the Church. The philosophers spoke about a soul that is immortal by nature and a body that is mortal by nature. This distinction was not accepted by the Fathers, who, as we have seen, teach that both the soul and the body are creations of God.

> "According to Plato, it is the archetypes that do not change. And the soul, because it is similar in kind to the archetypes – they are spiritual and so is the soul, they are immaterial and so is the soul. Like recognises like. Naturally, therefore, the soul has the natural ability to know these archetypes. However, due to the soul's imprisonment in the body, the soul finds the body an obstacle to direct knowledge of these archetypes, which it certainly knew in a previous life.
>
> Because of this analysis we have what is called the 'maieutic' (literally: obstetric) method, by which man, in order to know the truth, simply needs to remember it. There is a state of forgetfulness: the soul has forgotten the things it knew, so it has to remember them. We have this famous method of Socrates, the so-called 'maieutic' method, whereby the teacher extracts information that already exists inside the human being. Thus knowledge of the archetypes is innate in man. The soul knew these archetypes before it was imprisoned in the body. Of course, this Platonic perception took the form in Christianity of innate knowledge of God and man."

In addition, Plato asserted that the human soul was naturally immortal, whereas Aristotle did not accept "the immortality of the individual soul", the so-called passive soul.

> "There is a distinction between Aristotle and Plato, because Aristotle does not accept the immortality of the individual soul. The individual soul is not immortal. Because in Aristotle, as we and the Arabs read him, two souls exist. There is the creative soul and the passive soul.

The passive soul, which is the individual soul, is not immortal. It comes into being through the union of outward form with matter, and when this union between outward form and matter is dissolved, the passive soul is dissolved and disappears, at which point the individual disappears for Aristotle.

There is one creative soul for all human beings, so there is collective immortality, which is the immortality of the form of humankind, but not immortality of individuals. There is no immortality in Aristotle's teaching on origin and decay. In Plato, however, from the commentaries on Plato – no one can be very certain about Plato on this issue – it seems that for Plato individual immortality exists. At least there seems to be individual immortality and it is linked with Plato's teaching on eudemonism.

In Aristotle, as individual immortality does not exist, it means that before a human being is born he does not exist as an individual, and after the death of the body, again he does not exist as an individual. This being the case, Aristotle's teaching on eudemonism refers to temporary happiness in this life. There is no question for Aristotle of individual happiness after death, just as it does not exist before birth.

For Plato, however, there is the issue of happiness both before man's birth and after his death. There is not only immortality of the soul, as the soul survives after the death of the body and exists afterwards in the other life, but for Plato the immortality of the soul entails the soul being without end and also without beginning. In the same way as the soul has no end, the soul also has no beginning. Thus for Plato the soul pre-exists.

To be sure, on these issues there is the question of whether Plato has been influenced via the Dionysian religions by Eastern traditions, where there is a doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul and of its existence after death, and by teachings about reincarnation, which are familiar today in Hinduism and Eastern religions, and which seem to have existed in Zoroastrianism. There is a theory that these are of Eastern origin and are not part of the classical Greek world, where it is believed that Aristotle at least is more representative of the Greek spirit."

Be that as it may, the glorified Fathers did not accept these views of the classical philosophers, although they knew them from their studies. This was because they knew from their experience that things are completely different.

> "Plato's teaching was never acceptable to the patristic tradition, because the Fathers of the Church never accepted the natural immortality of the soul. For the Fathers of the Church the soul is mortal by nature and not immortal by nature.
>
> It is naturally mortal and not naturally immortal because for the Fathers of the Church only God is immortal by nature. Only God is by nature without beginning and without end. Man has a beginning by nature, because he is a creature, but by nature he ought also to have an end. So man is not naturally immortal."

However, the soul is immortal by grace, since God so willed.

Classical Greek philosophy also develops the view about the soul being liberated from the body, so that it can return to the uncreated world of ideas and have experience of God. According to Plato, "Man is like in nature to the supreme immaterial good."

> "Since the soul has this similarity with the supreme good, it naturally has the ability within it to know God, provided it is delivered from matter. Because the human soul is imprisoned in the body and the body is the tomb of the soul. Consequently, if the soul is delivered from the body, the soul is once more united with the supreme good and has experience of God."

The glorified, however, teach that man's vision of God comes about by God's free gift of grace.

> "For someone to see God is God's gift to him, and this gift is also shared by the body, which is also glorified and participates in the divine vision. The experience of glorification pervades the whole of human nature: the whole human being shares in this experience."
>
> "In Plato there is the complete opposite. The soul must be liberated from the body in order to see God, whereas in Orthodoxy this is a major heresy.
>
> From this point of view, the question of whether the soul is immaterial or physical is completely irrelevant for us Orthodox Chris-

tians, because the way in which God is known is glorification, which is a gift from God. As the body shares in the experience of glorification, it does not matter whether or not the soul is immaterial. Even if it is material it participates, given that the body also participates in this experience."

On the subject of ecstasy the perception of Orthodox theology is also different from that of philosophy. The Fathers of the Church, since they have personal experience of these issues, made a distinction between experiences of divine vision and demonic experiences.

"With Neoplatonism, in which Platonic philosophy is clearly merged with religion and various superstitions, the criterion of the philosopher's ecstasy is introduced. The spirit leaves the body, time, dimensions, distances and ordered thought, and comes into contact with the transcendent.

This comes about through ecstasy, which is a state in which the human being is completely freed from his sense perceptions and has direct contact with the divine."

Classical Greek philosophy, which depended on reasoning and imagination, also influenced Western theologians on the subject of the soul.

"Before his baptism Augustine believed in the pre-existence of souls. He has the complete Platonic phraseology in there. He speaks about the need for the soul to return to its home country. The return of the soul means its return to the world of ideas, of the archetypes."

"The great Frank, Thomas Aquinas, interpreted Aristotle as teaching the immortality of the individual human soul, not only of the creative soul, which means that every human being is immortal."

With modern scientific information, however, the views of classical metaphysics, including those concerning "the existence of an immaterial soul" have been demolished.

"We have a curious phenomenon as a result of this development: man's thinking, his ability to deal with abstract ideas, is not due to the existence of a spiritual soul, as the philosophers believe, because the human cell system itself is involved in all the intricate concepts that occupy the human spirit.

The old arguments about the existence of an immaterial soul used by the Platonist and Aristotelian-Frankish theologians are now completely lost. They can no longer prove the immortality of the soul with this kind of philosophical argument, because today we teach computers to think, which means that the old metaphysical foundations of Western theology have now been destroyed."

It is not possible for us nowadays to be apologists for Western Christianity on the subject of the soul, which has been influenced by the views of ancient classical metaphysics. The glorified Fathers of the Church knew from their experience that the soul was God's creation and did not originate from the uncreated world of God.

"There are some pietistic textbooks that write that the human soul is from God. If the human soul were from God, then man would be God by nature. According to the Fathers, the human soul did not come from God but from nothing. Just as the body comes from nothing, that is to say, from non-being."

The glorified Fathers also teach that, because the soul originated from non-being, it is created and the soul's immortality is not due to nature but to grace.

"The human soul itself is material and not purely spiritual, if we understand God Himself as spiritual."

"Consequently in the Orthodox tradition the immortality of the soul does not depend on the soul being immaterial, non-composite, indivisible and so on; it is not based on nature but on the will of God."

For that reason the Fathers place great importance on man's glorification, that is, on the glorification of soul and body.

i. Rational and Noetic Faculties (Energies)

The glorified saints knew from their experience that the soul is rational and noetic. St John of Damascus writes this, and we also see it clearly in the works of St Maximos the Confessor, the writings of St Gregory Palamas and the teaching of the other holy Fathers. The saints were aware of a faculty (energy), which was connected with the grace

of God in the heart and which they called 'nous'. This faculty could, after ascetic practice in accordance with grace, be differentiated from the rational faculty, which they called 'reason' (*logos*).

Since the nous functions in the heart, what is called the spiritual heart, the terms 'nous' and 'heart' are interchangeable. Sometimes a distinction is made between the nous and the rational faculty (*logiki*), and at other times between the heart and the rational faculty (*logiki*).

> "There is the human heart. According to the Hebrews in the Old Testament, that is to say, according to the Prophets and according to the Fathers of the Church, the heart is the spiritual centre of man's life, whereas the mental centre is the brain.
>
> Therefore the latter is called mind and reason (*logos*) and the former is called heart or spirit. For that reason, when the Apostle Paul says, '*The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God*' (Rom. 8:16) and so forth, this needs special interpretation and is the key to Orthodox teaching on both sin and freedom."

The Apostles and Fathers of the Church spoke about this subject in the light of their experience and not by conjecture. They felt a warmth in the heart, and that attention was concentrated there and praying.

> "It is clear that the nous is not a component of human nature separate from the emotional or rational soul. The nous is an energy (faculty) of the soul, as is the reason (*logos*).
>
> The distinction is not of a metaphysical nature, but simply a recognition of spiritual experience. It is due to the fact that someone who is illuminated or glorified is simultaneously aware of his complete communion with God and of his relationship with his fellow human beings and the whole creation. Love, will and the passions have now been purified and are activated in both directions: towards and within God, and towards his fellow human beings and creatures."

We shall examine this subject of the noetic and rational faculties (energies) in more detail.

Every uncreated and created being has energy, the difference being that the energy of uncreated beings is uncreated and that of created

beings is created. Thus the soul, as a creation of God, has energy. Depending, however, on where it acts it takes different names. We therefore speak of energies (faculties) of the soul.

The Fathers of the Church, from their experience, made a distinction between the noetic energy (faculty) and the rational energy (faculty).

"The Fathers knew that there is an organ of the human personality which is not something additional but part of the human personality, which they called the noetic faculty, in contrast with the rational faculty.

The rational faculty is what we nowadays call the human brain, that is to say, the whole neurological memory system that is centred on the brain. In contrast to the reason (*logos*), they called the other energy the noetic faculty, which is supposed to be in man's heart, but it is not in the heart when it is not functioning correctly."

These are two parallel faculties of the soul.

"There are two parallel functions of the human personality. They are the rational and noetic faculties. Someone may be brilliant with his rational faculty. He may be an excellent theologian as regards reasoning, and yet his nous may be hardened; his nous may be in darkness. On the other hand, someone may be completely illiterate from the worldly point of view and yet have an illuminated nous and even know how to illumine the nous of others. In other words, this illiterate may know how to guide others from purification to illumination. So is he 'illiterate' from the Christian point of view?

And who is 'illumined'? Someone who is highly educated and has no idea about the illumination of the heart, or someone who has illumination of the heart and also knows how to guide others to illumination? That is why we see the strange phenomenon that in Orthodoxy the most illumined people are often those who have not studied theology at university. Therefore we have two phenomena. The first is someone who is illiterate as regards his rational faculty and illumined in his nous. The other is someone who is enlightened in his rational faculty but his nous is darkened.

There are other examples where someone is illumined both in his rational faculty and his nous. This combination has given us the great Fathers of the Church. When a Father of the Church only has

his nous enlightened, we have the great ascetic Fathers who are unrivalled in spiritual matters. Everything they have written about the spiritual life is unequalled, but they have not left us writings like those of, say, St Basil the Great or St Gregory of Nyssa, who also had an excellent secular education. Then we have the other category, people whose hearts are hardened and who are dim-witted as regards their rational faculty."

Spiritual fathers are concerned with this noetic faculty of the human soul. Psychiatrists, however, do not know about it, and identify it with the rational faculty.

"As the results of the state of illumination were well known, the Fathers examined these results, just as psychiatrists nowadays examine the human personality.

Except that contemporary psychologists and psychiatrists do not know about the existence of man's noetic faculty. The Hindus are familiar with it, because they know this distinction between reason (*logos*) and nous. And they have a specific ascetic teaching concerning these matters.

This means that the spiritual father in Orthodoxy is a sort of spiritual psychiatrist. What is he concerned with? With fantasies or reality? When someone has noetic prayer, is it fantasy or reality? If it is reality, then Orthodoxy is valid, it is something scientifically sound. If noetic prayer is not a reality, then Orthodoxy itself is a fantasy."

The rational faculty functions in the human mind (*dianoia*), and the noetic faculty, in regenerated man, functions in the heart. The Fathers of the Church say that "The nous is a faculty of the soul that is not the same as the mind, but is inside the heart."

"The natural place for the nous is within the heart, not in the rational faculty, because the nous is not the rational faculty. It is not the muscle of the heart that prays, but the noetic faculty prays within the muscle."

"In the patristic tradition this noetic faculty is a natural function of the human personality, and this faculty ought to act in the place of the heart. When the noetic faculty functions naturally and correctly, it functions in that part of the human body. The mind is the

brain, the grey matter located in our head. That, according to the Fathers, is the rational faculty."

Thus the rational faculty is not a faculty of the body and the brain but of the soul. The brain is the organ that receives the rational energy of the soul, but it does not produce rational thought. Animals too have a brain with cells and the complete structure, but they do not produce complete rational concepts. Reason is a faculty of the soul. As the soul does not belong to the uncreated world of ideas but is the creation of God, the same applies to the rational faculty. The view developed in the West that the rational faculty in man proves the existence of immaterial rational powers (*logoi*), as they believed in the soul's natural immortality.

"In the West the proofs concerning the existence of God were linked with man's ability to know things that are not material. Concepts are non-material things. According to them, rational thinking is not material, because they believed what the ancients said about man being different from other beings because he thinks rationally, whereas neither animals nor plants think rationally. Only human beings think rationally and that is because the rational faculty is not material.

This leads to the idea that, as there are rational powers (*logoi*) and human beings are lower rational powers, there must be a higher reason that brings together all the other rational powers. This leads to the doctrine of the existence of immaterial rational powers. There may be many of them, in which case we have many gods; or there may be one, in which case we have one God. Plato and Aristotle and all the ancient Greek philosophers were polytheists. They believed in many gods."

Thus the rational faculty does not belong to the uncreated world of ideas.

"The Franks, following Augustine, regard the idea that the soul is material as heresy."

"We find this in patristic theology, with the perception that man's rational faculty belongs to the created universe and is limited, and man cannot know God by means of his rational faculty."

ii. Reason and Nous

The Fathers of the Church in their writings called the rational faculty 'reason' (*logos*) and the noetic faculty 'nous'. Thus we meet the terms 'reason' (*logos*) and 'nous' in many patristic works.

> "When someone reads the Fathers, particularly the Alexandrians from the era of St Makarios the Egyptian, as well as Dionysios the Areopagite, reason (*logos*) and nous are continually mentioned."

Certainly the word 'nous' is etymologically linked with the Greek word *dianoia*, 'mind'. Although these two words have almost identical meanings, the Fathers made a distinction between the nous and the mind-reason in order to express the experience that they had been granted by the grace of God.

> "In modern Greek philosophy reason (*logos*) and nous are the same thing. So when we say 'rational faculty' or 'noetic faculty', most people who read the Fathers say that it is the same thing."

Confusion also arises from the translation of neptic texts into other languages, which identify the nous with the mind (*dianoia*).

For the Fathers 'nous' and 'mind' are not the same thing. This is clear from the fact that when the Fathers say that the nous descends to the heart they do not mean that the rational faculty, the brain, descends – which is impossible – but the noetic faculty, which is different from the rational faculty.

> "I do not know how the terminology for 'nous' changed. It seems, however, that the Fathers, in order that the Hellenistic world would understand that this noetic prayer, the prayer of the heart, is not something emotional, took the synonyms 'reason' (*logos*) and 'nous' and made a distinction between them, saying that 'reason' would be the brain, and 'nous' would be the noetic faculty."

The word 'nous' is also used for angels, who are called 'noetic powers', as we saw above. In the use of the word 'nous' the Fathers were also guided by the fact that Apollinaris had used this term.

> "Apollinaris is known to have denied to Christ not the human rational faculty but the human nous. He said that Christ took a ra-

tional soul, but the Word (*Logos*) took the place of the nous. This is an Arian doctrine. So this anthropology is clear even from the heretics."

As well as speaking about the nous and reason (*logos*), the Fathers at the same time made the distinction between the nous and the rational faculty. The work of the nous is different from the work of the rational faculty.

The Old Testament also speaks about the heart, as do the Apostle Paul and the early Fathers.

"For the Hebrews there is the heart. The Old Testament refers to the heart. They have a more biological perception. In the Fathers, however, we have the heart and man's noetic eyes, the mind (*dianoia*) and the nous, as St Symeon the New Theologian says. The mind is the rational faculty and the nous is what prays. But both together are called 'noetic eyes' or 'noetic energies' (faculties) of the soul."

"The Apostle Paul follows the older terminology, where no distinction is made between the reason (*logos*) and the nous, as is also the case in St Dionysios the Areopagite and the more recent Fathers. In fact the Cappadocians do not distinguish between the reason and the nous. The Cappadocians always refer to the nous."

"In the patristic tradition, perhaps for the first time in St Makarios the Egyptian, it is clear that a distinction is made between the reason and the nous. The nous is identified with the function within man's heart, and from then on 'reason' (*logos*) together with 'mind' (*dianoia*) are identified with man's rational faculty."

Originally the Fathers "inherited a tradition using the term 'heart'". This was the tradition of the Old Testament.

"They said 'heart' and nothing else at first; they either said the 'spirit' of man and nothing else, or the heart of man. Then after a time the Fathers began to make the distinction between nous and reason (*logos*), to differentiate between the two, so that the noetic faculty would not be identified with the rational faculty.

For this purpose they took synonymous words, because in Greek nous and reason (*logos*) are the same thing. Just as they made a dis-

tinction between hypostasis and essence, so they did the same here. They said, 'From now on we shall refer to what is in man's head as 'reason' (*logos*), which is man's rational faculty, and we shall give the name 'nous' to what prays in man's heart, and that is the end of the matter.' That is what they did.

So this nous is not identified with the rational faculty or with the heart, although when the nous prays, it always prays in the heart. This is the strange thing. Because man knows this from observation; he hears it. He actually hears it."

It ought to be emphasised that in the earlier Fathers the soul, which has various energies (faculties), is often designated by the term 'nous'.

"We also call the mind (*dianoia*) 'nous'. So from one point of view the soul has different faculties: it has reason, it has sense perception, reason and nous. The soul has these faculties.

In other Fathers it is the nous that has various faculties, in other words, the nous is the soul that has various faculties. It has reason; it has the ability to pray in the heart and so on. This is a matter of terminology."

Finally, "the Fathers say that the noetic state is not rational. The nous is something other than reason. That is why they have separated these two terms."

This means that we take notice of what the words describe and convey. In order to express experience, a better and more complete terminology is required.

"What is important is not the exact words used to pray this prayer, but that the nous is not confused with the rational faculty. That is important. The faculty of the nous is not to be confused with the faculty of reason: it is completely independent."

When the human soul is functioning naturally, thoughts (*logismoi*) are located in the rational faculty.

"There is the grey matter, which is called the brain, where there are thoughts (*logismoi*). These thoughts are the work of the rational faculty. Thoughts (*logismoi*) do not mean what 'immoral thoughts' mean today. Those are the invention of modern Greek Puritans.

For the Fathers of the Church a thought (*logismos*) simply means a rational concept, nothing more. It is reason; thoughts are the reflections of the rational faculty."

"In man's nous one word should prevail: the uninterrupted remembrance of God, which is achieved through 'single-thought' prayer. 'Single-thought' prayer means one thought (*logismos*), the remembrance of God and nothing else: 'Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me a sinner.' One thought, which will be only the Lord of Glory, in man's nous; that is why it is called 'single-thought' prayer."

It is a basic teaching of the glorified, who have experience, that the noetic faculty - the nous - acts in the heart.

"When the nous functions naturally, it is in man's heart and prays. When man prays with his rational faculty, that is human prayer, the human being is praying. When, however, his nous prays within the heart, then the Spirit is praying. That is why the Apostle Paul tells us, *'I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding'* (1 Cor. 14:15).

Thus there are two prayers. For the Apostle Paul, however, it is obvious that *'the understanding'* here means the rational faculty. When he says, *'I will pray with the spirit'*, this is the prayer of the Holy Spirit within man's heart. The Apostle Paul often refers to the prayer of the Holy Spirit within man's heart."

"The early Christians were conscious of the fact that man has a faculty that ought to be in the heart and ought to become an organ of the Holy Spirit, when it prays in the heart without ceasing, twenty-four hours a day."

"Only when this faculty functions is the nous within man's heart. When it does not function correctly it wanders around and has become confused with man's rational faculty."

"When ascetics practise asceticism, they reach the point of seeing the nous. They actually see it. They see when it is outside the body or in the heart. It is like a ping-pong ball, a sphere; it is luminous and they see it. So when it departs from where it ought to be, they see it leaving, and when it returns, they see it coming back."

"That is why the entire ascetic teaching of the Orthodox Church

is based on separating the nous from the rational faculty, and confining the nous inside the body, particularly in the place of the heart.

The strange thing is that those who are involved in this ascetic praxis know how to locate the nous, whether it is here or elsewhere, and whereabouts this faculty is wandering. And they have to restrict it, so that it is possible for the Holy Spirit to come and dwell there and pray."

When someone has experience of God, he does not lose his reason and his senses.

"This knowledge that the saints have of God in one respect includes man's rational faculty, because man's rational faculty and his body remain observers of this experience. He does not lose his senses; they participate in the experience of divine vision. However, the experience of divine vision itself surpasses the senses and the power of the rational faculty, so the knowledge of God is beyond reason.

The Fathers describe this knowledge as 'unknowing', not because it is bereft of knowledge, but because it surpasses knowledge. It is not a kind of knowledge. In comparison with man's natural knowledge, which is acquired through the rational faculty, it is unknowing. It is not, however, ignorance, because it is the vision of God. Man actually participates in the uncreated, which has no similarity with created things. This is the experience of the Prophets, Apostles and saints of the Church and is the foundation of theology. It is the only real and secure bridge between God and man."

It becomes obvious that the role of the rational faculty is different from the role of the nous. Through the rational faculty we know the created things around us, and through the nous we know God.

"The rational faculty has its place in theology. At the stages of purification and illumination the rational faculty definitely participates. It understands what we can know about God and what we cannot know about God. Also, the rational faculty understands that the aim of these words is to inspire us with concepts. These concepts, however, are guides to glorification and cannot be equated with glorification.

> Heretics attempt to remove the distinction between glorification and illumination. Thus they use concepts to equate understanding with glorification. They believe that through reflection they have arrived at the pinnacle of knowledge about God, so they know better than those who have reached glorification."

Through his rational faculty man classifies his experiences and describes them. For example, someone cuts himself and it hurts. This is an experience. He then analyses it by means of the rational faculty.

> "I have a traumatic experience. I have cut myself and I am in pain. Then the rational faculty, on the basis of its experience, starts making an analysis. It makes connections and deductions, and tries to find a solution. 'What shall I do now? Shall I call the doctor? Shall I treat myself? Should I put iodine on it?' It observes; it takes part in an observation, which is a concentration of the whole neurological system. There is concentration, then there is an analysis, and afterwards a decision is made about what to do."

The experience of God, through the nous, also inspires the rational faculty, "which translates the experience into human language."

If someone attempts to reach knowledge of God through the rational faculty, he goes astray, as "the rational faculty is uncontrollable. Everyone imagines whatever he likes."

Attempting to acquire knowledge of God through the rational faculty leads to heresy.

> "Augustine's conviction that man can conceive God with his rational faculty is the basis of all the differences between Orthodoxy and the Franks."

The holy Fathers therefore differentiate between the nous and the rational faculty. The Hindus, who practise transcendental meditation, are also aware of this distinction. In their case, however, although the nous is emptied of thoughts (*logismoi*), it goes off in another direction, as it is not filled with the Holy Spirit.

> "The Hindus are aware of the noetic faculty. They know about the distinction between reason and nous, and they have ascetic teaching on these issues."

"The Hindus know that, apart from the rational faculty, there is the nous. They know this and do spiritual exercises to reach the point of expelling all thoughts (*logismoi*) from the nous, without having single-thought prayer.

Our own people expel all thoughts (*logismoi*) from the nous and afterwards single-thought prayer remains, which descends from the rational faculty and moves to the heart. As one player passes the ball to another, so the rational faculty, once the nous has been purified, passes the prayer to the heart. Then the heart prays noetically and the rational faculty says Vespers. So someone can pray in two ways at once; he can say Vespers as well as praying noetic prayer, or he can write and cook."

Whereas the Hindus know that the noetic faculty exists and are aware of the distinction between the nous and the rational faculty, psychiatrists are ignorant of this.

"However, contemporary psychologists and psychiatrists do not know about the existence of man's noetic faculty."

"If the psychiatrist knew about the existence of the nous, would he not be obliged to find a way of putting this nous into action, to enable the human personality to function correctly? I believe that this is the point of contact between contemporary Orthodox theology and people today."

iii. The Noetic Faculty in relation to Passions, Rational Faculty and Environment

Apart from the rational aspect of the soul there is the passible aspect. As the Fathers of the Church had inner experience of the energy of the passions, they accepted the tripartite division of the soul as taught by Plato. The writings of the Fathers record that thoughts (*logismoi*) are in the rational part of the soul and the passions act in the passible part, which is divided into the appetitive (or desiring) aspect and the incensive aspect.

Certainly the Fathers accepted this tripartite division of the soul, as devised by Plato, but they gave it different conceptual content. According to Plato, the rational aspect is linked with the immortal soul,

which was in the uncreated world of ideas, and the passible aspect (desire-anger) resulted from the Fall through the linking of soul with the body, which is the soul's prison.

According to ancient Greek philosophy, the object of man's struggle is that the soul should know the archetypes and return, by means of its rational aspect, to the world of ideas, once it has deadened its passible aspect.

"The work of divine grace in Augustine is that all the desires within man should cease. Augustine is greatly influenced by the Platonic perception of man, namely, that it is the rational aspect of man that is the human being proper. Next there are the passions: there is the desiring aspect of the soul and its incensive aspect. For Augustine the desiring and incensive aspects are the result of the Fall. For that reason, to reach salvation one must abandon them. Thus in the perfect human being neither the desiring nor the incensive aspect exists. This is the source of all the strange perceptions of the Protestants, Calvinists and so on concerning these matters, as they are influenced by Augustine's views.

The Latins are also influenced by Augustine's views, but not completely, because they have modified the teaching on the desiring and incensive aspects. St Thomas Aquinas does not follow Augustine on this subject, whereas the Protestants followed Augustine. The Lutherans and the Calvinists follow Augustine on this issue.

Anyone can see how distant Augustine's perception is from the Orthodox tradition. For us the incensive aspect and the desiring aspect continue to exist in the glorified human being, with the difference that, instead being angry on his own behalf, he is angry at injustices against others and desires the good of others.

Desire and anger still exist, but now they are glorified. They have now undergone a change because, by reason of the purification of the nous, selfish love has been replaced by unselfish love. Unselfish love now rules the desiring and incensive aspects. That is why someone who is glorified does not become angry on his own behalf, but he is angry for others when wrongs are committed against them, and he desires what is good for others. This change comes about within him. So when we say 'mortification of the pas-

sions', we do not mean the abolition of passions but the glorification of passions. This is very important. St Gregory Palamas discussed this exhaustively with Barlaam."

The holy Fathers of the Church did not accept the views of ancient philosophy, but gave a different meaning to the tripartite nature of the soul. Apart from the rational faculty, they also spoke about the noetic faculty, which functions in the heart. When the nous returns to the heart it also transforms the passions. It does not mortify them because, as we have seen, both the soul and the body were created in a positive manner by God.

The man who is transformed by God's grace does not reject the love that is linked with desire and anger, but he acquires unselfish love. Love exists, but when the illumined nous is in the heart, love ceases to be selfish and becomes unselfish.

"The only therapeutic treatment that brings love is the purification and illumination of the nous, and the cure, unselfish love, comes mainly through glorification. Then the good works that someone does are no longer simply ascetic training, but the fruit and the results of the love that he has as a natural state. They are not simply external works. They are expressions of his inner being, because he has been transformed. That is why glorification is a change. An anthropological and therapeutic change comes about in man's personality."

In man's natural state the nous comes into communion with God, through noetic prayer and the vision of God (illumination-glorification). Then both the rational part of the soul and its the passible part (desire-anger) receive the radiance of the illumined nous. Thus the whole human being, made up of soul and body, is transformed.

Whereas in Western theology, as formulated by Augustine and influenced to a large extent by his Neoplatonic views, the illumination of the nous means knowing the archetypes of beings, in the theology of the Fathers of the Church the illumination of the nous is "the separation of the energies of reason from the energies of the nous, and for the nous to have been purified from all the effects upon it of the rational faculty and the passions, and to be occupied only with prayer."

Thus the noetic faculty – the nous – in its natural state is not only

free from the influence of the energies of the rational faculty, of the passions and even of its surroundings, but at the same time this illumined faculty influences the rational faculty, the passions and the environment and transforms them. When someone is in this state all the senses become unified, and the nous is singly concentrated within the heart.

The strength of the martyrs and new martyrs in not denying Christ, and the actions of 'fools for Christ's sake' should be interpreted in this light.

> "Spiritual fathers knew that the Turks would seize him (the Christian who had repented) and try to make him deny Christ again, so they prepared him in such a way that he would not deny Christ. And he went through the worst tortures. This is very important because the nous, when it has noetic prayer, is no longer influenced by anything. From then on the nous does not accept anything at all from the rational faculty, the passions or the environment. This is the purification of the passions to which the Fathers refer: the nous is no longer influenced by anything. That is why we have the tradition of those fools for Christ's sake, and others who went into brothels in order to get the women out of there. They went in and saw naked women and it made no impression on them. Why? Because their nous was illuminated."

He whose nous is illuminated is not only free from the influence of the rational faculty, the passions and the environment, but illumines his rational faculty, his passions and his surroundings. Then he becomes, according to Christ's words, *"the light of the world"* (Matt. 5:14).

iv. Rational and Noetic Worship

Earlier we identified how the rational faculty and the nous function in the natural man, as he was created by God. We referred to the rational faculty and thoughts (*logismoi*), which are linked with the environment; and to the faculty of the nous, which functions in the heart and acts independently of the rational faculty, the passions and the environment.

The distinction between the rational faculty and the nous determines the distinction between rational and noetic worship, that is to say, the difference between these two functions during prayer. The rational fac-

ulty is linked with created things and the nous with God. Sometimes, however, the nous touches eternity and communicates with the angels who are in the age without end.

There is rational and noetic worship. The public worship of the Church is performed with troparia, hymns and prayers, and it uses the rational faculty. Noetic worship takes place 'without speech', 'inarticulately' in the heart through the energy of the Holy Spirit and one word is used: the name of Christ.

> "That is why we refer in the Liturgy to the rational worship that we offer to God. Public worship, Liturgies, Vespers and all the services, together with the Mysteries (Sacraments), are rational worship that is offered to God through the rational faculty by every parish. In it we use our rational faculty.
>
> However, apart from rational worship there is also noetic worship. Noetic worship is performed in a man's heart, not by him, but by the Holy Spirit Himself, Who acts as the chanter and the priest within the heart. So someone hears psalms and prayers in his heart, when he has reached the state of illumination."

This can also be seen in the teaching of the Apostle Paul.

> "This is why we have rational worship. We say, 'We offer to You...' We offer rational worship to God. This is our own worship, because we say it using our brain. This is what Apostle Paul means when he says, *'I will pray with the understanding.'* By *'understanding'* the Apostle Paul means the rational faculty. *'With the spirit'* in the Apostle Paul refers to noetic prayer. *'I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding'* (1 Cor. 14:15). He means, I will pray with my reason and I will pray with my spirit. The Holy Spirit comes and prays in my own spirit."

Many words and concepts are used in rational worship, whereas in noetic worship, "man's nous remains without concepts. Only in noetic prayer it has concepts of prayer, but when glorification comes, prayer ceases."

Rational and noetic worship in the natural human being, as he was created by God, take place simultaneously. "This is obvious according to the Fathers. It is amazing."

Noetic worship is what leads man to the vision of God and glorification. The illuminated nous is the appropriate organ for seeing God.

> "In patristic theology, the nous of those who are illumined is even more important than books. When the nous is in the state of illumination it is like the astronomer who looks through the telescope."
>
> "In the Christian tradition this nous is not illumined by us going to the supermarket and buying a chemical solution to polish the nous. It is not done with chemical solutions, as happens in astronomy, when we polish the lens in order to see more clearly. Here the lens to be polished is the heart itself, which is polished by means of asceticism."

Since the nous, like the soul, is created, it is impossible for it to attain to the vision of God on its own, without the uncreated grace of God. When someone reaches the point of seeing God, he is in a natural state, like Adam and Eve after their creation and before their fall.

> "For us, everyone who is glorified is a normal human being, because his nous functions, it prays and so on, since he is illumined. That is why he is normal. And the most normal of all is someone who has reached glorification and is counted among the glorified."

In the state of divine vision the whole human being participates in the experience and knows God's energy, but not His essence. Even when God is revealed to man He remains a mystery. Thus God reveals Himself while concealing Himself.

> "When man arrives at the vision of God, all his normal experiences accompany him. His senses, his nous, his rational faculty, his passions, everything participates in the experience of glorification, but nothing in the human rational faculty perceives God. God goes beyond all man's capabilities. For that reason, in the revelation itself God remains a mystery."

With noetic prayer, especially when it attains to the vision of God, the nous does not go astray, and it experiences theology free from error.

> "Anyone who does not have noetic prayer is automatically in error. Why? Because his nous is in a state of error, regardless of

whether he is Orthodox. His nous is in error. It only rejects error when it is in the state of noetic prayer."

True Orthodox theology is linked with the illuminated nous.

"Theology is the function of the nous. There is no other Orthodox theology for the Fathers of the Church, because the gift of discernment of spirits is acquired through the function of the nous, and this is the sole precondition for theology. Theology has no other subject-matter, neither speculation nor anything else."

On the contrary, when man's nous is full of thoughts (*logismoi*), he cannot theologise in an Orthodox way.

"Anyone who theologises with his nous full of thoughts (*logismoi*) does not produce correct theology, because he ought to have only one thought in his nous. If he has other thoughts in his nous, he cannot theologise correctly.

He may be able to theologise more or less **about** Orthodox theology, because he reads patristic texts and conciliar decisions and he has a formal knowledge of the faith. But he will never be able to classify all the material correctly or to understand the relationship between these names and concepts and the reality of the Fathers' spiritual experience."

All the above leads to the conclusion that man was made by God to specifications that enable him to reach divine vision with his illumined nous acting in his heart. Then he ascends to the vision of God and in this way acquires knowledge of God, which is conveyed using the rational faculty. This is the natural human being as created by God.

d) The Human Body

The basic teaching of the Church, as set out in the book of Genesis, is that the human body is God's creation, together with the soul, and is given life by God's energy, through the soul. Man's soul is linked with his life.

The body is composed of cells, which constitute the tissues, and these tissues in turn form the various organs.

"The body is made up of cells; the whole body is a system of

cells. The cells undergo dissolution, which is why the body disappears and becomes dust."

"One cell goes to one part of the body and becomes an ear, another an eye, and so on. The cells, to be sure, have a memory system inside them. They know how to develop, where they will go and where they will stop, in which location they will multiply and how to play their part in the place where they are."

As the soul animates the body that is joined to it, so the Holy Spirit animates the soul, and the grace of God is transmitted through the soul to the body as well. Thus the whole human being becomes spiritual.

"That is why we have these strange phenomena in Orthodoxy: hermits, naked ascetics, stylites, tree-dwelling saints and so on, because Orthodox spirituality turns people who are physically weak into lions as regards their souls and their endurance, even against the natural elements."

The Neoplatonic perception (a continuation of Platonism) that the soul ought to be separated from the body, which is evil, is not acceptable to the Fathers of the Church. They regard this idea as demonic.

"The Neoplatonists had the same orientation. In their case, in order for someone to be in contact with the beyond, he had to deliver the soul from the body, so that the soul would be set free from its tomb, which is the body.

In the patristic tradition the experience of glorification does not belong to the soul: it is also the experience of the body. The whole human being participates in the experience of glorification, because it is not only man's soul that is glorified but also his body. The entire personality is glorified. When someone sees God, the whole human being sees God: his rational faculty, his eyes, his nose and his mouth, the whole human being takes part and he is not struck dumb.

The Neoplatonists' experience of aphasia is regarded as being demonic in the Orthodox patristic tradition. The attempt to free the soul from the body and for the soul alone to come into contact with the uncreated – the Platonists did not call it 'uncreated', for them it was what had always existed and the soul was part of that world, fell from that world, and later will return to that world once again.

Thus the Platonists do not make this distinction between created and uncreated – this teaching that someone should attain to ecstasy and through ecstasy come into contact with reality is regarded as demonic according to the view of the Fathers. The Fathers do not accept it and condemn it. They stress that the experience involves the whole human being, both soul and body."

Glorification includes the whole man.

"This experience of glorification includes the whole human being, not only the soul but the body as well. We have glorification of the soul, the rational faculty, the nous and the body. We even have glorification and purification of the passions."

The glorified saints know from experience that the body too participates in the experience of glorification, but also that a suspension of bodily functions comes about.

"As long as someone has glorification he does not sleep, he does not eat, he does not drink, forgive me for mentioning it, but he does not even go to the toilet. There is a complete suspension of all man's natural functions, as long as the state lasts.

Even if it lasts a year, man is in a state of suspension of his natural bodily functions. This does not mean that he knows nothing and does not speak. This state is not the ecstasy of the Neoplatonists or idolaters. It has nothing to do with mysticism or mystic ecstasy, because while in this state someone has all his senses and speaks and converses with others. He is completely in possession of his senses and is in contact with all his surroundings. The nous does not undergo a departure from the world, the realm of dimensions, colours and so on.

This is a very important point and calls for careful attention, in order to ensure that the Orthodox experience of glorification is never identified with the mysticism of Buddhists, Africans and various idolatrous religions and philosophies. It is something completely different."

Western theologians, influenced by Platonists, spoke about the happiness of the soul after the resurrection of the body.

"Since Augustine is influenced by the Platonists, the body has no part in happiness: happiness concerns only man's soul. Thomas Aquinas is concerned with the subject of eudemonism and asks himself three, four or five questions at a time. Then he sets out a point of view, and then he replies to all the questions that he has put to himself. That is his method. He begins with questions, then comes the thesis and afterwards the answers. And he writes continuously. Come to the office and I shall show you the outline of his book.

Well, one of the things he asks is what the risen body contributes to man's happiness. Insofar as happiness means acquiring God, and only God makes man happy, what need is there of the body? And he says that essentially the body contributes nothing to man's happiness. We accept the resurrection of the body because it is something that Holy Scripture teaches and it adds *'a certain charm'*, it is something nice. It lends charm, fascination; it has something to offer, but essentially it contributes nothing to true happiness. In that case, why is the resurrection necessary? In order to be stuck there with a body that isn't necessary? So we see that the scholastic theologians who follow Augustine are not consistent in their own teaching."

The soul is therefore closely connected with the body, without being absolutely identical with it. Both are God's creations. The whole human being consists of soul and body. Man is made up of two parts, but he ought to have the grace of God as well, which sanctifies soul and body.

The saints know from their experience that the whole human being participates in the experience of glorification. He becomes radiant and glorified. This, apart from the words of Christ, gives them assurance that the body will also be resurrected at the Second Coming of Christ. They do not accept the views of the ancient philosophers about the soul being immortal by nature and the body mortal by nature. The soul is not immortal by nature but by the will of God, and the body shares in the experience of glorification.

Part 3

The Fall of Man

The Fall of Man

In the previous chapter we looked in detail at how the world and man were created, how the soul and the body functioned, and what natural man was like after his creation.

In the book of Genesis the God-seer Moses not only describes what concerns the creation of the world, but also the event of man's Fall and the consequences of this Fall for the whole creation. The creation was not free to fall into corruption, but it was led astray by fallen man. Given that man is also part of the visible world, it follows that he passed on the consequences of sin to the whole creation.

Before the Fall man's nous was in communion with God and the angels. He saw the glory of God and in this perspective all the faculties (energies) of his soul and body were transformed. Everything had an impulse and momentum towards God. After the Fall, however, all this was reversed, as the darkened nous did not direct the faculties of the soul and body and did not radiate light to creation.

We shall now look at what came about through the Fall of man.

1. The Life of the First-Formed Human Beings before the Fall

The state of the first-formed human beings both before and after the Fall is described by the God-seer Moses in the book of Genesis. He had acquired a 'a self-revealing eye'. He had beheld the Existing One, and in the Spirit he knew everything that had happened. Subsequently he described it in created words and concepts.

Even before Moses comparable states are occasionally described by the Prophets and Fathers prior to the Law. They too acquired personal knowledge of these events.

The same has been done by the Fathers down through the ages. They read the events surrounding the creation of man and the Fall in the book of Genesis, but they interpret them through their personal experience. In other words, by means of the personal experience that they have gained, they give an interpretation of man both before and after the Fall.

There are two traditions, the Alexandrian and the Antiochene, with regard to what Adam was like before the Fall. Both of these views are recorded in the work of St John of Damascus.

> "There is an account of the creation of man in Genesis. There is a patristic interpretation of this chapter on the creation, the Fall etc.
>
> In patristic theology there are two interpretations of the Fall. The first, which prevails in Antioch, is that when man was made, God put him into the state of illumination, and he fell from illumination. In Cappadocia, Alexandria and other parts of the early Church, the tradition exists that man was in the state of glorification. Other traditions have a combination of the two."

> "Certain Fathers of the Church believe that the nous of the first-formed human beings was in a state of divine vision. This is a strong tradition that belongs to the Alexandrian school. In Antiochene the-

ology, however, there was the remembrance of God with divine vision from time to time, but mainly through their memory and their personal experience of ascetic practice. And there are two stages of theoria. One is illumination, which is unceasing prayer, and the other is radiance, vision, continuous vision, which is divine vision – glorification."

"St John of Damascus describes both these views to us and does not take any particular position on the subject. He leaves the reader to choose whichever he prefers."

"I have published a study in which I give an outline of St John of Damascus. He describes the first-formed human beings in two ways: in the first case they have noetic prayer, and in the second they have glorification. Now, as to whether they had glorification or noetic prayer, whether their nous had remembrance of God or their nous beheld God, there are two traditions. We do not know which one is correct."

When the Fathers of the Church interpreted the book of Genesis, "they were not concerned with Adam as Adam, but with Adam's nous. Adam fell sick because his nous became darkened." That is why different events in the life of the first-formed human beings before the Fall are not described analytically. The Fathers are interested in what happened at the Fall. In fact, the state of his nous before the Fall and its state after the Fall is emphasised, since "basically man was made for glorification."

"Essentially the Fathers were not interested in exactly when the first-formed human beings were created, how they were created, what state they were in, and so on. But what did the Fathers do? They took the current experience of illumination and glorification and they interpreted the Old Testament on that basis.

They were familiar with this experience of illumination both from the Prophets and the New Testament, but mainly from their own personal experience, because they had spiritual fathers in the state of illumination, who perhaps 'travelled' now and again into the state of glorification. From their personal experience they had spiritual children, whom they guided using the Prophets of the Old

Testament and the Apostles, and they interpreted Holy Scripture correctly."

The Fathers of the Church interpreted the events of Adam and Eve's creation and their life in Paradise before the Fall on the basis of their own experience of divine vision, or as they saw it in glorified Fathers. When they saw saints who had been renewed spiritually and had experiences of illumination and glorification, they said that this is more or less how the first-formed human beings would have lived in Paradise. We say 'more or less how they would have lived' to show that now with the incarnation of Christ and the glorification of human nature in the Person of the Word, man has been given the possibility of being united with Christ. Consequently his glorification is more powerful, and someone who is glorified can experience a more exalted spiritual state than that lived by Adam and Eve in Paradise.

"The Fathers take someone who is glorified as he is now and someone who lives in theoria as he is now, and they project the spiritual father of their own time back into the era of Adam and Eve. The Fathers take the contemporary state of theoria, which is noetic prayer, glorification, and say, 'This is man. This is man's fallen state; this is man's resurrected state.' So when they theologise about Adam and Eve, they simply theologise from this point of view.

Adam and Eve might have had noetic prayer or glorification, they might have had divine vision or noetic prayer – they might or they might not. Whatever the case, they were in the state of theoria. There is no doubt about that. Whether this theoria was continuous remembrance of God or whether it was the vision of God is another question."

We should also note that the Fathers of the Church analysed the spiritual state of the first-formed human beings in the light of man's renewal, that is to say, his cure, and not with a scientifically or spiritually inquisitive turn of mind.

"We say what the first-formed human beings were like. They either had noetic prayer or divine vision, in other words, glorification. It does not matter exactly what state they were in; it is of no interest to us whether they had noetic prayer or glorification. What

is important is that this is how man is cured. Even before man fell sick, in his natural charismatic state, he was either in the one state or the other, it does not matter. The nous, however, is an anthropological phenomenon.

Just as we have cells, a heart, arteries and so on, in the same way, apart from these things, man also has this nous, which is darkened. The nous is neither a theological phenomenon nor a philosophical phenomenon. It is an inseparable part of the human being, like eyes, teeth, nose..."

2. Ancestral Sin

There are many ways of understanding what constitutes ancestral sin from the Orthodox patristic point of view. In the following pages the essence of ancestral sin will be emphasised. Many views have been formulated on this subject, which reveals the difference between orthodox theology and other Confessions.

The essence of ancestral sin goes deeper than the meaning usually ascribed to it. First of all the holy Fathers teach from their experience that man has two kinds of memory. There is the memory in the cells of his body, which help him to function well, and there is the memory of the heart, where the name of God is recorded and unceasing noetic prayer is offered.

> "Today the scientists know that there are two types of memory in human beings. There is the cell memory, called DNA, which is like the tape in a cassette recorder and 'plays' the renewal of man's cells, with programmed developments in the cell. Because of this memory, the cells know what to do. They know how to multiply, like an electronic computer that performs this task of multiplying cells.
>
> Here we have a strange phenomenon, that the cell is inseparably separated, indivisibly divided among divided things. This is a very strange thing, because it resembles the mystery of the presence of God in the world, as described by the Fathers of the Church, that God is indivisibly divided among divided beings.
>
> This is more or less what the cells do too. A cell multiplies without losing its own identity, because every time any cell multiplies, the whole cell and all the genes are the same. And inside these cells there is DNA that programmes the cells' entire development and multiplication. This could not be done by the cell if it did not consist of a memory. There is a memory system inside it that guarantees the correct development of all the biological organisms in the world, all the living creatures.

Apart from the memory in the cells, we also have the memory in the brain, the memory that exists in the grey matter possessed by the animal kingdom and human beings. Even the world of plants has memory.

Now, apart from these memory systems that science now recognises, there is another memory in the Orthodox tradition, which is based in man's heart. This memory system, however, has ceased to function due to the Fall of man. When the Fathers speak about the Fall, they mean the termination of the memory system that existed in the first-formed human beings."

"The essence of ancestral sin is that God made man with two centres of his personality. One centre is the nervous system. At the head of the nervous system is the brain, the grey matter, which is connected with man's whole nervous system and directs his relations with the outside world. Then there is man's cell system, which, as we now know from the biologists, constitutes a complete system of cell memory, like a computer."

Apart from this centre of man's personality there is another centre based in the heart, the spiritual centre of his personality. Thus man's Fall is the termination of his spiritual memory system. This also had ethical consequences, but it was an ontological problem.

"Many people nowadays understand the Fall as an ethical fall, whereas, when St Symeon the New Theologian speaks of the Fall he does not mean an ethical fall, because St Symeon the New Theologian does not have an ethical system. St Symeon the New Theologian is an ascetic. He teaches asceticism not ethics. He thinks ascetically and not ethically. He means that human beings do not have noetic prayer. That is what he means."

The Fathers call this termination of the memory system of the heart 'obscuring of the divine image', 'darkness of the nous', 'a nous without understanding'. "Everywhere in patristic literature the Fall is a matter of the darkening of man's nous." "A fallen human being is one whose nous is darkened. That is the end of the matter."

At the same time this fallen nous is described as 'inactive', in other words "it has ceased functioning" in a natural way, as it was created by God.

As mentioned already, the holy Fathers studied "the historical description of the Fall, to which Holy Scripture refers", but they interpreted those events through their own experience, as they knew what the illuminated nous was.

> "The illumination of man means the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in his heart. Then he becomes a temple of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit Himself acts within his nous and illumines it."
>
> "How do we know that Adam's nous was darkened? Simply because we know that we ourselves now have a darkened nous."

The experience of the darkened and illuminated nous led the holy Fathers to interpret the state of Adam both before and after the Fall. It is essential to stress this to enable us to grasp that the holy Fathers were not speaking philosophically or imaginatively but empirically.

After this explanation we should define what is meant by the inactivity and darkening of the nous, in other words, we need to investigate what is meant by the 'inactive nous'.

Man's nous, as it was created by God, should have moved towards Him and have been characterised by 'supranatural' movement. With the Fall, however, it lost this movement and moves 'naturally' or 'unnaturally'. The faculty of the nous is 'faulty', and this finds expression in the fact that man becomes selfish, turns towards the body, and has selfish love instead of selfless love.

> "The nous exists in the fallen state and it is inactive. It has vestigial energy that needs to be activated."

When the nous "does not function correctly" it is called an inactive nous.

> "For us the Fall is located in the nous, that is to say, when the nous stopped functioning. This is the Fall."

Unnatural functioning of the nous means that it does not receive the energy of God's Light, so it becomes dark. That is why we refer to the 'darkening of the nous', which is the most characteristic feature of the Fall. A darkened nous "means that the noetic faculty in man's heart does not function correctly." This is sin. "Sin is the darkening of the nous, the darkness in man's heart." All the Fathers spoke about the darkening of the nous.

"Read any Father you like. They refer to the first-formed human beings and their successors as having their nous darkened. The nous has become dark. We also say it in the Akathist Hymn. This darkened nous is the diagnosis. The nous becomes darkened and the cure is the illumination of this nous."

The glorified interpret sin as an illness.

"In the Augustinian tradition sin appeared in an ethical form, whereas in the Fathers of the Church it takes the form of an illness, and the elimination of sin takes the form of therapeutic treatment. We have illness and we have its cure. Sin is man's sickness. It is not simply misbehaviour by man, who does not obey God as a subordinate. Sin is not an action or a transgression of God's commandments, like transgressing the laws of the State. There are laws; a transgressor breaks the law and he ought to be punished by the law. This is how Augustine understood sin: that God gave commandments, man transgressed God's commandments and was punished accordingly."

The Fathers know that man fell sick through the Fall, since "the darkening of the nous is an illness." Therefore they speak about diagnosis and treatment.

"The diagnosis is that man suffers from this sickness called sin, which is darkening. One finds this term, 'darkening of the nous', again and again in the Fathers, continuously. Whatever Father you read, they all speak about the darkening of the nous.

This darkening of the nous is the diagnosis. What is the cure? The illumination of the nous. We have darkening and illumination. It is the same terminology. Darkness and light. Darkening and illumination. That is the beginning and end of the matter."

As God is Light and the absence of the Light creates darkness, when the nous is not illumined by God it is darkened and obscured.

"What is the diagnosis? It is that man's heart has been obscured. What we call the 'nous' in later patristic language, that heart has been obscured. On account of the Fall it has lost the remembrance of God, and this remembrance of God must return."

There is an analogy between the nous and the lens of a telescope. When there is something wrong with the lens of the telescope the light cannot pass through it and one cannot see anything. In the same way, when man's nous is obscured, he cannot see God.

> "Man's uncreated eyes, that is to say, the uncreated grace that dwells within him, within his nous, within his heart, this uncreated grace has been obscured by the smears on the lens called the nous. And since the lens in this telescope is not polished, the light does not shine through this lens, or it does not let the light through to enable someone to use the telescope and see the stars correctly.
>
> In a similar way the lens called the nous or heart of man has been obscured, so he cannot see the glory and rule (*vasileia*) of God that is within him, or the uncreated divine grace within him. This is called blindness. Man is blind. He was created to see God, but he does not see God. So from this point of view man is blind and does not see the Light."

When we refer to the darkening of the nous, we do not mean darkening of the rational faculty. In the previous chapter we made the distinction between the nous and reason. Thus with Adam's Fall it was not his rational faculty that suffered harm but his nous.

> "The nous was in a state of divine vision and was darkened, not the rational faculty. There are no signs of man's rational faculty having been darkened. Anyone who knows anything about modern science sees that man's brain works excellently."
>
> "Since man may be very intelligent as regards his rational faculty, he seems not to have suffered anything due to the Fall of the first-formed human beings, because when the Fathers say that his nous was darkened they do not mean his rational faculty. If the nous were identified with the rational faculty, one would conclude that, if the nous was darkened three million years ago, when man had a small head with a capacity of 700 cubic centimetres, now that it is 1,400 cubic centimetres, even if we started with a darkened nous, it would be very illumined compared to what it was originally.
>
> When the Fathers say that the nous of the first-formed human beings was darkened they do not mean the reason, but another faculty of the soul, which is centred on the heart."

"Someone may be excellent in the positive sciences, but illiterate from the point of view of theology, because his nous is darkened. His rational faculty is illuminated, but by the positive sciences. So man's rational faculty did not suffer harm on account of the Fall. It was man's nous that suffered harm and was darkened."

The Fathers are familiar with the darkening of the nous from their own experience, but also from their pastoral experience, when guiding their spiritual children. From this point of view, human beings are divided into those whose nous is darkened and those whose nous is illuminated.

Together with the darkening of the nous, ancestral sin is the confusion of the nous with the rational faculty, the passions and the environment. The nous before the Fall hastened with eager impulse towards God, free from the energy of the rational faculty, the passions and its surroundings. However, when it became inactive it was identified with the rational faculty, the passions and the environment. This is characterised as the Fall.

"Since the Fall the nous has been darkened. Why? Because it is full of thoughts (*logismoi*). When does the nous become darkened by thoughts? It happens when thoughts from the mind descend into the heart and become thoughts of the nous. That is to say, there are thoughts in the nous, which ought not to be there, because they belong in the rational faculty-mind. The nous ought to be completely empty of thoughts so that the Holy Spirit can come to man, and dwell and remain within him."

"From the patristic point of view, the Fall of man is the identification of the energies of the nous with the energies of the rational faculty.

When the nous is darkened, the energy of the darkened nous is identical with the rational faculty and the passions."

When the noetic faculty "does not function correctly, it wanders here and there, and is confused with the man's rational faculty. They called this energy the 'noetic faculty'. It is man's nous, which is not his reason."

In this state "the nous does not work. It has become a prisoner

of the rational faculty, that is, of thoughts. It does not function properly."

Ancestral sin, therefore, is the inactivity of the nous, the darkening of the nous and its identification with the rational faculty, the passions and the environment. This has terrible consequences.

3. Consequences of the Fall

The consequences of the Fall are not simply ethical, spiritual, psychological and social, but anthropological and ontological. As the nous is distorted, all the powers of man's soul are altered. When the nous, which directs the inner world of man's soul, becomes inactive and dark, the whole composition of his soul is disordered. Then he becomes an enemy of God. St James, the Lord's Brother, speaks about the enemies of God: *"Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God"* (James 4:4). According to the patristic interpretation, God is not man's enemy, but man becomes an enemy of God.

> "Man becomes an enemy of God through the darkening of the nous. When the nous is darkened, it is inactive and does not work, but even when it works, it works demonically. Someone whose nous is darkened is the enemy of God, in the sense that he does not do God's will, because he is in the dark."

Someone whose noetic faculty does not function or functions vestigially is sick and a servant of sin.

The basic consequence of ancestral sin was death, according to God's words to Adam:

"And the Lord God commanded Adam, saying, 'You may eat food from every tree in the garden; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you may not eat; for in whatever day you eat from it, you shall die by death'" (Gen 2:16-17).

After the sin, death entered man's existence, firstly spiritual death, the loss of God's grace, and then physical death. Spiritual death is the darkening of the nous and the interruption of the relationship of the soul and nous with God.

> "The death of the soul is the lack of glorification, which means the vision of God."

The nous no longer moved towards God. It ceased to be illuminated by the uncreated Light of His glory; it was obscured and transmitted this darkness to the body and the whole of creation.

After the sin, Adam and Eve, through the special providence of God, put on garments of skin. According to patristic teaching, the garments of skin are corruption and mortality, and the life lived by irrational animals. Thus the way in which human beings are conceived, carried in the womb and born is counted among the consequences of the Fall. It was to be expected that the spiritual death of the soul would be passed on to the body as well, so man experienced what bodily death means.

> "God is not the cause of death. Man brought death on himself because he separated himself from the glory of God, Who is the source of his life. Consequently God did not impose death on man as a punishment for any sort of inherited guilt. Rather, God permitted death on account of His goodness and love, so that the sin and evil in man would not become immortal."

Death is an illness, but old age, which leads unavoidably to death, is also an illness. This view is now supported by science.

> "It has been finally proved that old age is a sickness. It is not natural for a human being to grow old. They have now done important experiments in which they remove pieces from the glands of animals and put them in the freezer. They reckon that an animal lives for fifteen years. After ten years they take the glands out of the freezer and sew them back onto the glands, and they have now managed to extend the life of certain laboratory animals. That is to say, they might lengthen human life by 30% or 50%. Now gerontologists are discussing whether death is a sickness. In other words, it has been proved that old age is a sickness."

> "Here we have a strange phenomenon, that ordinary cells multiply and are renewed usually every seven months. Every seven months all the cells in the human body have changed, apart from the cells in the bones, which undergo a complete change every seven years. Whereas in the first case they change every seven months, in the second every seven years they are completely renewed, except

for the glands. Here we see something strange. The glands are not renewed, but gradually die.

Now in gerontology, in the last twelve years or so in which this science has developed, they have been studying old age and death, to see whether they are natural occurrences or illnesses. As far as old age is concerned, they have reached the conclusion that it is a matter of illness. As regards death, they are not sure whether it is an illness or whether it is natural. Old age is clearly not a natural phenomenon. This can be concluded from the fact that the glands seem to control man's old age. No renewal of cells takes place there. All the other cells are renewed and change periodically, including cells in the blood. Everything changes and is completely renewed, and no difference in cells is apparent between an eighty-year-old man and a twenty-year-old, the cells are the same. The glands, however, become impaired.

These experiments have convinced them that old age is a sickness affecting the glandular system. One of these glands is the human brain, part of the neurological system. So what the Fathers were continually saying about death and old age being a sickness has already been half proved and has been accepted, whereas in earlier times they might read one of the Fathers of the Church who said that these things were a sickness, but everyone else used to say that it was a natural state. It has now been proved that old age is not a natural state. Consequently in this field as well it has been shown that the Fathers were in some sense modern. They never accepted old age as a natural development, but as a sickness afflicting man. The Fathers accept death as an unnatural state, whereas the gerontologists are discussing the issue.

Inside human beings there is DNA, which is a tape, a spiral strip. There is DNA in every cell, and the DNA multiplies together with the cell, when the cells multiply. The dominant theory at present is that this tape is like the tape in a computer, in that sort of device, which has a fixed length, so the tape runs and the tape ends. In this way, man's life runs it course, the multiplication of cells takes place continuously, and so on, and when the multiplication tape finishes, the human being dies.

Yes, it is programmed and, once it has ended it has ended; except, of course, if someone is killed by a car or a complication arises in the body. But it means that natural death exists in the case of the elderly."

Although the righteous and the Prophets in the Old Testament attained to the vision of God, this state was nevertheless temporary, because before human nature was assumed by the divine nature it was infirm and could not keep this grace of God for long. So even the righteous and the Prophets died not only in body but also in soul, because they descended to Hades, to the realm of death.

"Those who had seen the uncreated glory of the Word died both in body and soul."

4. Inheriting Sin

When the Fathers of the Church talk about inheriting the ancestral sin, they do not mean inheriting the guilt of Adam and Eve. The ancestral sin was not an affront to God, but a sickness of man. Man was distanced from God and consequently, as we have seen, his soul lost the grace of God through the nous, and his body died.

We also saw that the human body was created from the earth and the soul was created by the in-breathing of the breath of God. This is repeated at the conception of every human being. St Maximos the Confessor teaches that the human soul and body are created simultaneously by God, but "each by a different way of generation". The way in which the body is generated "from existing matter" is different from the way in which the soul is generated, "being formed from the divine and life-giving in-breathing". This means that the soul is pure, the nous is illuminated, but the body inherits corruptibility and mortality from its parents, in other words, old age and death. The creation and union of soul and body is, of course, simultaneous with the conception of the human being.

Thus inheriting the ancestral sin actually means inheriting the consequences of the Fall, which are corruptibility and mortality, the so-called *"garments of skin"*. During man's development, the passible part of the soul is regulated by bodily death, which is present in the cells, so the bodily passions develop and man's nous falls sick and is darkened.

The Apostle Paul's words are characteristic: *"For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind* [nous], *and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?"* (Rom. 7:22-24).

In this passage of St Paul's it is clear that the nous rejoices in the law of God, but the other law, the law of the death of the body, mili-

tates against the law of the nous and takes it captive. The passions of avarice, self-indulgence and love of praise, which are linked with corruptibility and mortality, capture and darken man's nous.

It was emphasised in the previous chapter that man has a memory system in the heart-nous and another in the brain. The memory system in the brain is linked with the nerve cells and the development of the brain. It develops gradually, whereas the memory system of the heart-nous exists from the start of the soul's existence.

> "The All-Holy Virgin had reached glorification at three years of age. A small child is receptive. Its heart has not yet been hardened and it has not become cunning. A child's fall is due to its surroundings, its parents, its relatives and friends. If a child is in a good environment, that child can grow up without problems, with noetic prayer. The child has less of a problem than adults. It learns more quickly. The environment destroys the child.
>
> For that reason the Fathers stress that everyone is born like Adam and Eve, and everyone goes through the same fall. Darkening of the nous happens to each one. The nous that exists in the embryo is not yet darkened. Each one suffers the fall of Adam and Eve on account of his surroundings"

According to the Fathers, inheriting the ancestral sin principally means inheriting the consequences of the Fall, which are corruptibility, liability to suffering, and mortality. This also has implications for the soul.

> "Our own perception of ancestral sin, heredity and so on is the same as that of modern medicine, for instance, with DNA. They have now found a way not only of locating hereditary faults in the spiral ladder of DNA, but they also know the composition of DNA: which elements should be present, and where. They know the sequence that ought to exist. When they examine people who are born with six fingers on their hands and feet, or with three eyes or one eye, with half a nose or without ears, they examine the composition of the cell and see that there is an irregularity in the DNA, which is why the human being was born like that."

It follows that the entry of death into our life did not come as a

punishment from God, but as a result of the loss of divine grace. It is man's departure from the Light of God and a sickness of human nature, which needs to be cured. All the Church's pastoral ministry depends on this point.

The West, by contrast, was influenced on this issue by Augustine, "whom they regard as the greatest theologian and the greatest scholar on divine grace, the Fall and so on". There the inheritance of the ancestral sin was interpreted completely differently and the pastoral ministry of the Church was distorted as a result. Augustine had Platonic views with regard to the creation and the Fall of man.

> "In the beginning Augustine starts with Platonic presuppositions. He abandons some of the Platonists' views and afterwards he tries again to adapt Plato to Christianity. So contradictions become unavoidable."
>
> "Augustine introduced Platonic concepts into the dogma of the Holy Trinity. He brought in the idea that Adam and Eve had complete human knowledge – as much as anyone can possibly have. Of course, human knowledge for Augustine consists in vision of the archetypes, so anyone who knows the archetypes knows God and knows the essence of God. Adam and Eve knew the archetypes, so they had the knowledge that it is possible for a human being to have.
>
> The Westerners imagined Adam and Eve as perfect human beings, perfect in the Platonic sense. When they fell, they lost the memory of the archetypes, which is why Augustine always ascribed great importance to human memory in his life. He believes that knowledge of God is imprinted in the human memory. For Augustine, illumination means that man recalls to his memory those things about God. How he combines this with the doctrine of the pre-existence of souls, which he finally rejected, is a major problem in Augustine's thought."
>
> "The illumination of man (according to Augustine) simply means that his nous knows the archetypes. This is illumination. After that, glorification is when man has been glorified and sees the archetypes directly with his rational faculty."

Augustine also thinks that, in accordance with Plato's view, the pas-

sible part of the soul, that is to say, its desiring and incensive aspects, were added after the Fall.

> "Augustine has this idea that man was perfect and had divine grace. He did not have the desiring and incensive parts of the soul. He was in a state of happiness in the rational part of his soul. As a result of the Fall, however, the desiring and incensive parts appear."

He goes on to teach that the ancestral sin was an affront to God's righteousness and so man was punished. He does not see death as a sickness resulting from the loss of divine life, but as a punishment inflicted on man by God.

> "The significant thing for Augustine is that he thinks of death as a punishment from God. All were punished by God because they are guilty."

With these presuppositions we ought to look at Augustine's opinion of ancestral sin as an affront to God's righteousness, as well as his legal and contractual interpretation of sin, how this guilt passed into the human race, and how this view is linked with absolute predetermination.

> "According to Augustine, when Adam and Eve sinned, they sinned against God's righteousness and offended the infinite God. It follows that, as all inherit Adam and Eve's sin and guilt, all deserve to be punished. Therefore, we are all deservedly punished by God, but God, because He so wishes, has chosen from among those condemned to eternal damnation a group of people for salvation.
>
> This being the case, those who have not been chosen for salvation can have no complaint, because they are punished as they deserve. In fact, they ought to rejoice, because divine justice prevails. Nor can those who will be saved say that they are deservedly saved, because for them salvation is absolutely free, with no worthiness at all on their part. So they cannot boast.
>
> In this context, one indication that someone is predestined is that he is also a good human being. For the Protestants, this means that he is self-controlled, he does not steal, does not lie, and does not go round with women, that he is a good man. They divide people into good and bad.

Apart from this, particularly in the Anglo-Saxon world and also among the Franks, there was support for racism on account of Augustine's teaching. So the one who is predestined for salvation ought to be, we could say, white, tall, fair-haired and so on: a good-looking human being. If someone has an ugly face and is poor, discredited, wretched, a serf, disabled and so on, for the Franks it is not possible for him to be predestined."

The views of Augustine on ancestral sin were, as was to be expected, linked with the theory of absolute predestination, which distorts God's love towards man, the aim of Christ's sacrifice on the Cross and the entire pastoral ministry of the Church.

"All were punished by God, because all are guilty. The problem is how they are guilty. Is guilt hereditary in a biological way, or is it guilt in a representative way, so that Adam and Eve, as representatives of the human race, sinned and consequently not only the representatives were punished but also the human race.

Another approach is that, simply as representatives, they lost something to the detriment of the human race. As when a father does stupid things and loses his wealth, and the children are then born poor on account of the father. The children are poor because the father, who was rich, has now lost his wealth. This view also exists. It depends on what each one wants to get out of Augustine concerning these issues. What is important from the point of view of God is how matters really are.

Augustine accepts the doctrine of absolute predestination. As a consequence, he introduces the idea that everyone is deservedly condemned to Hell. This condemnation is what man deserves. God, however, Who is also love, does not allow His work to be completely lost and has predestined certain people for salvation. Part of the human race is predestined to be saved.

This predestination of part of humankind is not because their deeds are worthy of reward, because they ought deservedly to go to Hell. Therefore, he who receives divine grace and will be saved cannot boast that he was saved through his works. He was saved through the predestination that he has from God, by God's will. He ought to be humble and keep quiet and not think that he is better

than everyone else from the point of view of what he deserves. Even someone who is not predestined must not complain, because he is deservedly punished.

From this standpoint Augustine has another strange idea that, when we say that God loves sinners, it does not mean that He loves all sinners. It simply means that God loves those sinners who are predestined. God does not love other sinners. So His love is limited.

Adam and Eve sinned and the guilt passed to the whole human race. By reason of this guilt, everyone is deserving of Hell. If there are some who are predestined for salvation, God loves them, because He so wills. The others cannot complain because they are deservedly punished. They cannot demand to be saved, because they deserve to be lost; they are lost on account of Adam and Eve.

Those who are saved are saved, not because they deserve to be, but on account of the love of God Who chose them. They ought to be humble, not proud. Thus the curious distinction arose whereby God loves sinners who are predestined. He does not love them as sinners; He loves them as though they were perfect human beings, because God does not love sinners.

Then Christ died so that human beings would be saved. Christ, however, did not die for all. He died for some. These passages are to be found in the writings of Augustine, and because of these passages the Franks have a very strong tendency to believe in absolute predestination."

If one compares these opinions of Augustine with all the teaching of the Fathers, as summarised earlier, the difference is obvious. God loves the righteous and the unrighteous. All who are cured, who respond freely to God's love and acquire unselfish love themselves, will be justified. This comes about through the power of Christ.

5. Old and New Adam

The Fall of Adam caused sickness in the whole of human nature and the incarnation of the Son and Word of God, the new Adam, cured human nature. This is the basic teaching of the Church on the Fall of man and his cure.

We have the sickness of the old Adam within us, as a fall from the Light of God's glory and darkening of the nous. However, we should also be aware of the life of the new Adam as our return to the prospect of illumination and glorification.

> "We Orthodox say that no one can become a Christian unless the old Adam is destroyed within him. He must be a new Adam in order to be a proper human being. That is what the Fathers say. But how does he become a new Adam? How is the old Adam wiped out? In the old Adam the nous was darkened, which is the reason for what happened in ancient times.
>
> I don't know, but perhaps the Greek word for 'rogue', *palianthropos*, which literally means 'old man', is a variant on the old Adam. I don't know, but when someone is an 'old man' it means that he is not a 'new man'.
>
> Therefore, as he is an 'old man', it means he is not a Christian, that is to say, he is a *palianthropos*. The etymology has theological significance. *Palianthropos*-rogue has theological roots at any rate. This word *palianthropos* that we use in colloquial Greek seems to be the old Adam."

The life of Adam in the beginning was the life of illumination and glorification. Through sin man lost his likeness to God, the image of God in him was obscured and he forfeited divine life. Now he is required to pass through purification of the heart in order to reach illumination of the nous and to experience glorification. We see this in the lives of the saints, but it is particularly obvious in the martyrs.

"The martyrs are those who had attained to noetic prayer. They had continuous remembrance of God, their nous functioned. In other words, their heart had reached purification. They prayed the single-thought prayer and had continuous remembrance of God. So when they went to their martyrdom and were tortured, it was the prayer that kept them from denying Christ, and they did not deny Him.

How did they undergo this martyrdom? When someone is in this spiritual state, he is no longer influenced by anything but the prayer, which prevails in his whole being. He does not give way to tortures or mutilations. Becoming a martyr and being tortured is not a human achievement. It is due to the grace of God that someone can do this. For that reason, in the early Church, someone who denied Christ under persecution was excluded from the Church and they gave him Holy Communion only on his deathbed."

This journey from purification of the heart to illumination of the nous and glorification is the purpose of the incarnation of the Son and Word of God, but also the task of the Church, as we shall see in the following chapters.

The conclusion of this chapter is that the holy Fathers knew the Fall of Adam empirically and lived 'Adam's lament', because earlier they had personally known participation in the glory of God in the uncreated Light in the hypostasis of the Word. This is the context in which the Fathers interpreted what concerns man's life before the Fall and afterwards.

Part 4

The Incarnation of the Son and Word of God

The Incarnation of the Son and Word of God

The Son and Word of God, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, became incarnate, in other words, He assumed human nature. Thus divine nature and human nature were hypostatically united in His Person. This means that the Word is a hypostasis in human nature.

The incarnation of the Son and Word of God came about by the will of the Son, by the good pleasure of the Father, and the co-operation of the Holy Ghost. All three Persons of the Holy Trinity collaborated in the mystery of the divine Economy. This happened at the right time, as the Apostle Paul writes: *"But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons"* (Gal. 4:4-5).

The unincarnate Word of the Old Testament took flesh with the incarnation. As a result, man's communion with God is now stable. Because human nature after the Fall lost communion with God, it failed to reach the state of being in God's likeness. Now, through its union with the divine nature in the Person of the Word and its glorification, everyone has been given the possibility of acquiring stable communion with God. Consequently the incarnation of Christ is a historical event, as all the Evangelists describe it, but at the same time it is a spiritual event that is confirmed by empirical knowledge.

1. Empirical Facts

It ought to be stressed from the beginning that the incarnation of the Son and Word of God is not a theoretical theological doctrine, but an empirical fact. It is a fact confirmed by the personal experience of the Apostles and the saints down through the centuries. The Apostles are eye-witnesses of the fact of the divine incarnation and particularly of the glory of the divine nature. This is clear in all the writings and Epistles that have been preserved and included in the New Testament.

The St John the Evangelist's testimony is significant:

"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life – the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us – that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things we write to you that [our] *joy may be full. This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practise the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin"* (1 John 1:17).

This supremely empirical and revelational passage says that God is Light and life, that the Apostles saw, heard and touched this Light and tasted this life, and that Christians ought to have communion with the Light and to walk *"in the light"*.

Another revelational testimony by the same Evangelist should also be included in this context, when he says that the Son and Word of God *"was with God"* and *"in Him was life, and the life was the light*

of men." "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:1-15).

St John the Evangelist gives this testimony because, apart from anything else, he was present on Mount Tabor, he saw the glory of God and was a witness to Christ's Resurrection.

Equally significant is the testimony of the Apostle Peter, who was there on Mount Tabor and saw the glory of the deity in the human nature of the Word. This testimony is preserved in his General Epistle, where he clearly confirms from his personal experience that Christ is the Word of the Father, true God:

"For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honour and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: 'This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased.' And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts" (1 Pet. 1:16-19).

The phrase *"cunningly devised fables"* refers to classical Greek metaphysics, which philosophised through myths, whereas the glory of God, by contrast, is an empirical reality. However, apart from the testimonies that the Apostles give to Christians, at the same time Christians are called upon to corroborate this evidence. St Peter the Apostle is referring to this when he speaks about the dawn of day and the rising of the morning star in the hearts of Christians (2 Pet. 1:19).

St John the Evangelist also refers to this personal confirmation when he writes, *"And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace"* (John 1:16). And the Apostle Paul sets out the personal experience of everyone who in Christ Jesus enjoys adoption as a son by Christ: *"And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, 'Abba, Father!' Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ"* (Gal. 4:6-7).

Someone acquires empirical knowledge of the incarnation of Christ through his whole life in the Church. Apart from the faith that comes by hearing, he acquires faith based on theoria.

> "The Christian is cured and initiated into the mystery of the incarnation by his spiritual father. He says that God exists, Christ the incarnate Word exists, that the saints are to be honoured, and so on. How do we know these things? Do we know them from philosophy or from the positive sciences? Where did we find them out? We know from the revelation. How do we know from the revelation? Because there are God-seers, who have seen the glory of God and reached glorification. They are the eye-witnesses as regards the uncreated glory of God, because there is no resemblance between God and the world."

The incarnation of the Son and Word of God is not a theoretical or intellectualistic doctrine, but a confirmed experience. It is seeing the glory of Christ's divinity, participating in the glory of His divinity, and sharing in His life, which transforms the life of Christians.

2. Christ-Messiah

It was mentioned in the previous chapter that the revelations of God in the Old Testament are revelations of the Word of God, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity unincarnate. In the New Testament the unincarnate Word takes flesh.

The Word does not make His appearance in history at the time of His incarnation. He existed and appeared to the Prophets in the Old Testament. At the incarnation the unincarnate Word took flesh.

> "For the Fathers of the Church, Christ does not appear for the first time when He is born of the Virgin, when He grows up and begins to teach the Apostles, in other words, Christ from Nazareth. Christ did not begin to exist then. He is in the Old Testament, not as a man, but only as Angel-God, the Lord of Glory."

Yahweh in the Old Testament, the Angel of Great Counsel, becomes Christ in the New Testament. The Word of God becomes Christ, after the human nature has been anointed with the divine nature. In the Old Testament the kings were anointed and were called the Lord's anointed (*christoi* in Greek). At the incarnation the human nature was anointed by the divine nature. So when the Disciples saw Christ, they saw the Father, but this came about in the Spirit.

> "In the Old Testament, Christ did not have a human nature. He is only the Word. He is the Word and nothing else, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, Who is called the Lord of Glory and Yahweh in the Old Testament. He is the Angel of the Lord, the Angel of Glory, the Angel of Great Counsel, Who appears to the Prophets.
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> When the Prophets see the Angel of the Lord, they see God. That is why Christ says: *'He who has seen Me has seen the Father'* (John 14:9). Anyone who sees Christ sees the Father; not, of course, the human nature of Christ, because we do not see God when we see

a human being. But when we see the uncreated person of Christ in the Holy Spirit, we see the Father, Elohim."

The name 'Christ' is used after the incarnation.

"The name 'Christ' refers to the human nature and means 'anointed'. Before taking human nature, the Word is not anointed. But the Word Himself is the anointing, the chrism (*chrisma* in Greek). God is the chrism, because man is anointed with the uncreated glory of God. The one who is anointed is not God; it is man who is anointed.

The Word was anointed as man, although He is simultaneously the source of anointing and the anointed one. This is the mystery of the incarnation: that He who is chrism by nature anoints Himself as man. Christ does not have the chrism according to grace; the chrism is His by nature. Christ is He Who is anointed by nature. This is the most fundamental difference between the Old and New Testaments.

For this reason, when the Old Testament refers to Christ, it does not refer to Christ as Messiah. Everything that has been written about the Messiah, the son of man, has been written from a non-Orthodox perspective. They have sifted through all the passages about Christ-Messiah in the Old Testament. It is obvious that in the Old Testament the messiah is a human being. They cannot understand how this simple man-messiah in the Old Testament appears in the New Testament as pre-existent and as a person of the Holy Trinity, as expounded in the Christian tradition.

Of course the anointed one (*christos*) in the Old Testament is the messiah, the man who is anointed. In the Old Testament the Prophets and the various rulers of Israel are called messiahs, because 'messiah' means someone who has been anointed by God for a particular mission. If we really want to see Christ, as we know Him in the Christian tradition, in the Old Testament, we should search in the theophanies in the Old Testament, not in passages about the Messiah."

The names ascribed to Christ in the Old Testament are Yahweh, the Angel of Great Counsel, the Angel or the Lord of Glory, and the Wisdom of God, not Messiah, which denotes a human being.

"What the Fathers and the New Testament stress is: *'Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him'* (Matt. 11:27). This means that no one knows God except those who see the Father in Christ: *'He who has seen Me has seen the Father'* (John 14:9). When Christ appears to the Prophets and the Prophets see Christ, the Lord of Glory, in the Holy Spirit, they see God. Thus, God is invisible but becomes visible through Christ to those who are in the Holy Spirit. This is called *'theosis'* in the Fathers of the Church and 'glorification' in the Old Testament. The Prophet is glorified, and once he has been glorified he sees God in the Holy Spirit.

The terminology 'Father' and 'Son' does not exist in the Old Testament. God in the Old Testament is not 'Father', nor is the Angel called 'Son', in those places where the Old Testament says that he is God. The son of man is the messiah, who is not God in the Old Testament. He is a human being, and everyone who receives the anointing is called messiah, that is to say, 'anointed'. Messiah means 'anointed', *christos*, in Greek. 'Messiah', '*christos*' and 'anointed' all mean the one who has the anointing (the chrism). This includes the Prophets, the High Priests and the various secular leaders of Israel. There are many messiahs in the Old Testament. In the Pentateuch, the noun 'messiah' occurs only five times, in Leviticus.

When Christ says in the New Testament, *'Moses...wrote about me'* (John 5:46) and we look in the Pentateuch, where does he write about Christ? If we think that Moses writes about Christ as the anointed one, in the Pentateuch the name 'Christ' (messiah, anointed one) occurs only five times in Leviticus and nowhere else."

When Christ says to the Jews that the Prophets and the righteous spoke about Him in the Old Testament, He was referring to Yahweh, the Angel of Glory. At His incarnation this Angel of Glory became Christ-Messiah.

"What is it that is called Christ? The Hebrews preferred to see Christ as Messiah, who was raised to the level of God. The New Testament, however, does not say that the Messiah became God. It says that God became Messiah. The Lord of Glory Himself became Messiah and was born of the Virgin.

So does the Apostle Paul say this or not? This is the problem. Who says it? The Apostle Paul does. Are there any writings in the New Testament older than St Paul's? We have nothing earlier than the Apostle Paul. All those things about the sources of Mark, Matthew, Luke and so on are theories at present. What we definitely have from 52 AD, a few years after the Resurrection, the first texts that we have, are those of St Paul. His Epistles to the Corinthians are among the oldest texts that exist in Christianity. There he says: *'that Rock was Christ'* (1 Cor. 10:4), the rock *'that followed them'* was Christ, *'they...crucified the Lord of glory'* (1 Cor. 2:8), and so on."

As mentioned earlier, with the incarnation Christ became Messiah, Prophet, Priest and King.

"The dogmatic theologians attempted to explain how the New Testament contains teaching about the Holy Trinity that is not in the Old Testament. Some of them dreamt up the theory that in the Old Testament there is an earthly Messiah, a this-worldly Messiah. Later, at some point in the history of Israel, a heavenly Messiah appears, and there is a lot of discussion about when the Messiah appears in the Hebrew tradition. Some think that he is the 'Ancient of days' in Daniel, and that this Messiah from Daniel came into the New Testament and was declared to be a heavenly Messiah...

The Fathers of the Church did not see Christ as Messiah in the Old Testament, but as the Lord of Glory, as the Apostle Paul says. In other words, Christ in the Old Testament is not the Messiah; He is the Angel of the Lord Who appears to the Prophets. In that case, the Prophet sees God, that is to say, he sees God in the Angel, and this Angel is Christ.

Of course, in the Old Testament He is unincarnate and in the New Testament He is incarnate. In the Old Testament this Angel is not Messiah, whereas in the New Testament, once He becomes man, He becomes the Messiah. Thus the Angel became the Messiah, but the Angel was not the Messiah before He took flesh. The messianic work of Christ is connected with the incarnation; it does not exist before the incarnation. When He became flesh, He became Prophet and Priest. He became King and Messiah.

In the Old Testament the noun 'messiah' appears five times in Leviticus alone. It is obvious that it refers to an earthly man. The 'anointed one' is he who has the anointing (chrism), nothing more. To be sure, Christ was anointed, but Christ Himself is the anointing, the Word is the chrism. Christ is the source of the anointing, because He is the chrism and is also Christ, the anointed one. He is the chrism as God and is anointed as man. Christ always has this double characteristic.

This is why the Apostle Paul says that the rock *'that followed'* was Christ. In other words: Christ followed. We take the name 'Christ' starting from the incarnation and ascribe it from then on to the unincarnate Word, because the Persons are identical, but not the natures, as Christ in human nature does not exist in the Old Testament. His human nature comes into existence from the All-Holy Virgin, when the Word is born of her, becomes man and takes all the characteristics of man with the types and so on.

Well, this is an interpretation, which is certainly that of the Fathers of the Church, but also of St Paul: that Christ in the Old Testament is the Angel of the Lord. This means that every time the Angel of the Lord appears to a Prophet, it is a vision of God."

In the Old Testament, therefore, according to the interpretation of the Holy Fathers, the unincarnate Word appears, not some earthly messiah. The Word becomes Messiah with His incarnation. Christ is both anointing as God and anointed according to His human nature.

"When the Fathers read the Old Testament, they are not searching for a messiah to equate with Christ in the Old Testament. There is no need for the existence of a transcendent heavenly messiah, such as some eschatologists who have studied in America are seeking, in order to teach us that method. We learn that method as little kids in America."

The discussion between the holy Fathers and the Arians was about whether the Word Who appeared to the Prophets was uncreated or created, which is why the Fathers introduced the term 'co-essential' (*homoousios*). What is significant is that in this discussion the Fathers used arguments from both the Old Testament and the New Testament.

"In the Arian dispute between the Orthodox and the Arians, what surprises anyone studying the writings of the Fathers against the Arians is that the Fathers use the Old and New Testaments indiscriminately. The Fathers draw arguments from both Testaments.

Why is this? What was the point of the entire dispute between the Fathers and the Arians? The Arians asserted that when the Prophets in the Old Testament saw the Word of God, they saw a created Word, a creation. Consequently the Word that took flesh is created. Against the Arians the Fathers set out the teaching of the tradition, that the Prophets did not see a created Word but an uncreated Word.

The dispute between them is whether the Christ Who appears in the Old Testament is created or uncreated. In other words, the conflict is about the vision of God. The Arians said that there is no vision of God in the Old Testament, and whenever anyone sees Christ, he sees a created Christ, a created Word. He does not see anything uncreated, but sees through the creation, which is a symbol of the uncreated. It is and it isn't uncreated itself.

So when the Fathers and Arians discussed among themselves and came into conflict about whether the Word is co-essential (*homoousios*) with the Father or unlike the Father, the Fathers asserted that the Prophets teach that Christ is co-essential with the Father, whereas the Arians said that the Prophets teach that He is not co-essential with the Father. The term 'co-essential' (*homoousios*) is the new element. 'Co-essential' is added to the tradition. But 'co-essential' is a word. It is something we say, a created expression. Is the concept of 'co-essential' new or does it exist already? It exists, because it conveys the Prophets' experience of glorification and their experience existed before the word 'co-essential' (*homoousios*).

This is why they were fighting about whether the Word Who appeared to the Prophets is created or uncreated. The Word is uncreated in the Old Testament. The experience of the appearance of the uncreated is a pre-existing experience in the Old Testament. What is added to the Orthodox tradition is the word 'co-essential' (*homoousios*). What does it denote? The concept that already existed in experience."

Thus Christ is Yahweh of the Old Testament.

"Someone who is now a professor once wrote a post-doctoral dissertation, in connection with his application for a lectureship, saying these things: Elohim, Yahweh – Yahweh is Christ – and so on. One of his colleagues, who is not even a specialist in Holy Scripture, started saying: 'Listen to that candidate saying that Christ is Yahweh in the Old Testament. Who ever heard of such a thing! I replied, 'Excuse me, dear colleague, but all the Fathers of the Church say the same thing. It is not some new theory; the Fathers say it.'"

The Fathers, bearing in mind the teaching in the Old Testament about the unincarnate Word, the Angel of Great Counsel, but also the teaching about the incarnation of the Word of God, laid down the dogma about the Triune God.

3. The Birth and Baptism of Christ

When we talk about the birth of Christ we are speaking of two births. One is the pre-eternal birth of the Word from the Father, according to the divine nature, and the other is the birth in time from the All-Holy Virgin, according to the human nature. This refers to Christ's two natures: the divine and the human.

> "The important thing is that this Word, before His birth in the flesh, is like the Father in every respect. He does not come from nothing. The Word has two births. One birth was before all ages and the other birth was in time, which is the birth as a man, the incarnation."

This theological fact is revelational and above all it is empirical, as the glorified flesh of Christ becomes a source of life for the members of the Church, particularly the saints.

> "It is not only the Old and New Testaments that clearly teach the fact that the Word, the Lord of Glory, Who is God by nature and co-essential (*homoousios*) with the Father, truly took flesh and was born in His own normal and separate humanity of the Virgin Mary – who is literally, really and truly the Theotokos or Mother of God. Thus He became man by nature, not just by indwelling, and, as the Word in flesh, He became co-essential with us through His humanity. This truth is clearly revealed to all who have reached glorification, from which they learn empirically that Christ is the Word, that He is God by nature and man by nature, and also by nature the source of glory. He passes on to His human nature the existence of the source of glory, by means of which the actual flesh of the Word becomes the source of our life and life-giving, because the Word Himself is incarnate, and on account of the union and exchange of natural properties between the divine and human natures of the Word."

In the Old Testament there was the tabernacle of witness, where the pot of manna, the tablets of the covenant and Aaron's rod were kept in the Holy of Holies. Now, in the New Covenant, the tabernacle is the flesh that He took from the All-Holy Virgin.

"This is why the statement that *'the Word became flesh and dwelt* (literally: 'tabernacled') *among us'* (John 1:14) is so important. This dwelling is the tabernacle. God 'tabernacled' among us. How? He became flesh and dwelt among us."

"The tabernacle of witness is the created form of the uncreated Temple, because the uncreated Temple is Christ Himself, the Word, this Angel of the Lord. For that reason Christ says, *'I am in the Father, and the Father in Me'* (John 14:10-11) and so on. That Christ is in the Father and the Father is in Christ means, in Hebrew terms, that Christ is the Temple of God. So we have the uncreated Temple, as we have the uncreated Law, which is Christ; and we have a created temple, which is the tabernacle of witness, which they later enclosed in Solomon's temple. This is why the created temple, the temple of Solomon, has been abolished and replaced by the created Temple, the human nature of Christ."

Christ as God-man is like God the Father and the Holy Spirit in every respect according to His divinity, and like man in every respect according to His human nature. The phrase that Christ is *"the image of the invisible God"* (Col. 1:15), refers to His uncreated divine nature.

"This is what the Apostle Paul says: *'the image of the invisible God'*, Christ, that is. When he says 'image' he does not mean something created, because there cannot be a created image of God. It is different if we speak about an image of Christ; in that case we have an image of something created, because Christ is man and we have an icon of Christ the man, not of Christ's divinity. But when we say that Christ is the image of God, as God is not incarnate, how can God have a created icon? He is the image of the invisible God as an uncreated reality, not as a created reality."

The incarnation of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity was in the pre-eternal plan of God, because through the union of the divine and human natures in the Person of the Word, the glorification of

every human being could come about. From this perspective, the Theotokos was in God's pre-eternal plan. St Nicodemos of the Holy Mountain wrote a specific text *About our Lady the Theotokos*, in which, by quoting the Fathers' words, he asserts that 'All the intelligible and perceptible world came into being for this end, that is, on account of the Lady Theotokos, but the Lady Theotokos came into being on account of our Lord Jesus Christ."

> "The All-Holy Virgin is in the pre-eternal plan of God, as the troparia and the Fathers of the Church say. This is a matter of description. It is not a philosophical question about whether or not the All-Holy Virgin is necessary for the incarnation. It is a fact that the All-Holy Mother of God is ever-virgin. We cannot philosophise about something that is a fact and say that the incarnation could have come about even without the All-Holy Virgin, or from a Mother of God who was not a virgin."

The All-Holy Virgin was the greatest gift of the creation and humanity to Christ. The successive purifications of her forebears, her own struggle and, most of all, the grace of God, made her worthy to become the Mother of the Son and Word of God. She experienced glorification in the Holy of Holies.

> "We know from the Tradition about the glorification of the All-Holy Virgin, who entered the Temple at three years old. She reached the Holy of Holies, which means that the All-Holy Virgin at three years of age had attained to the experience of glorification. She lived in the glory of God. She also beheld God from at least the age of three, and in this way she was made ready to be the Mother of God."

Christ is co-essential (*homoousios*) with the Father according to His divine nature and co-essential with us according to His human nature. Some people in the early Church claimed that Christ was co-essential with the Father and with His Mother.

> "Christ is co-essential (*homoousios*) with His mother. That means that Christ is co-essential with us. He cannot be co-essential with His mother and His mother co-essential with us, without Christ being co-essential with us."

The Church ruled at the Third Ecumenical Council that the All-Holy Virgin was to be called Theotokos, because she did not give birth to a mere man, but to the Word of God. The teaching about the Theotokos is therefore included in the infallible teaching of the Church.

The Theotokos has an important place in the Church.

> "In the Mysteries (Sacraments) of the Church the whole catholic Church is present: Christ with the Theotokos, the Prophets, the Apostles and the saints."

The faithful have a spiritual relationship with the Church. Anyone who loves Christ also loves the All-Holy Virgin, who assisted in the mystery of the incarnation of the Son and Word of God and from whom Christ took human nature and glorified it. The relationship of the faithful with the All-Holy Virgin is not, therefore, simply sentimental but spiritual.

The glory of the Theotokos is not a theoretical teaching, but empirical, as many saints have seen the glory of the Theotokos.

In any case, the human nature that was assumed by the Word and united immutably, inseparably, indivisibly and unconfusedly with the divine nature, was glorified "at the same time as it was assumed" in the womb of the Theotokos. Christ was not gradually perfected, as human beings are. Christ is God according to essence, whereas man is glorified according to participation. Also, according to the Fathers of the Church, Christ brings about glorification: He is Himself the source of man's glorification and does not 'undergo' glorification. Christ is God and glorifies others, like the other Persons of the Holy Trinity, whereas man is glorified. Christ revealed this glorified human nature to human beings by stages.

> "There is no question of Christ having passed through the stages of perfection, purification and illumination in order to reach glorification or theoria. There was no progress towards perfection in Christ, since He had glorification or theoria or participation in the union of uncreated glory from the very conception of His human nature in the womb of the All-Holy Virgin.
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> He did not possess this by the grace of God, but naturally, seeing that He was God by nature and the actual hypostasis of the Word, Who was the only one of the Holy Trinity to become man by na-

ture, uniting Himself with His own normal human nature, with all its natural properties, including the will and energy that are common to human nature in general.

Christ gradually revealed the stages of perfection in Himself (in other words, the glorification of human nature in Himself) to set an example to those who are on the way to perfection. He assumed everything that was common to human nature (except sin) not in external appearance, as the Docetists claimed, in order to delude those observing His human life, but in reality."

"After the incarnation of the Word, exactly the same method of revelation and glorification that took place with the Prophets is repeated with the Apostles. The difference now is that the Word reveals Himself in the natural and uncreated glory of His nature, which is shared with the Father and the Holy Spirit, by means of His own humanity. This humanity did not advance towards the continuous vision of divine glory, but was glorified through its union – not by grace but by nature – with the Word from the beginning of its existence in the womb of the Theotokos.

Christ did not progress as a human being towards glorification, but was conceived as a glorified man, not by virtue of the union that the saints experience with the divine nature, but by virtue of the one unique natural or hypostatic union with the divine nature and energy.

Thus Christ, as man, participates by nature in the divine glory and is the natural source of this glory. The glorification of the Prophets, Apostles and saints is a union by grace with the natural glory and energy of the divine nature, but the glorification of the human nature of the Word is its hypostatic union with God the Word and the resultant union with the divine nature. All glorified creatures see the divine glory and share in it. Only Christ, because He is the Word by nature, sees and participates by nature in the divine essence."

The saints understand this from their experience. When they reach glorification, the theoria of Christ's glory in His human nature, they realise that Christ is the source of the uncreated Light, whereas they themselves are participants in the Light.

The fact that Christ was perfect from the beginning was made clear on many occasions, even during His struggle with the devil.

> "In Christ this state of perfection was natural and not acquired. For that reason His struggle with the devil in the wilderness and His forty-day fast were not an achievement but a manifestation of perfection. At the same time it was a real fight with temptations, not from within but from the devil."

Christ voluntarily assumed the passible and corruptible aspects of human nature because He really took flesh. However, the so-called 'blameless' or natural passions – hunger, thirst, weariness, sleep – did not act in Christ by compulsion. Christ's divine nature had authority over them. So Christ was hungry when He wished to be, thirsty when He wished to be, slept or rested when He wished to.

The saints understand this to some extent from their experience. They too, when they reach glorification according to grace, observe a suspension of the natural and blameless passions: hunger, thirst, sleep and so on. In Christ this happened naturally because He was true God, and the human nature followed the divine nature.

> "The incarnate Word not only possesses the state of theoria naturally, not by grace, but even as man He Himself is the natural source of glorification and glory. If some of the natural and blameless passions are suspended in those who by grace are in a temporary state of glorification, how much more must those passions have no natural place in Christ, Who is glorified by nature and the source of glorification as man.
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> So one can see why it is a basic doctrine of the Orthodox Church that the Word as man wants to have the natural and blameless human passions, and really to share in them, transforming them into a source of our salvation and a means by which we ourselves can overcome the devil and pass through the stages of purification and illumination on our way to glorification. On the one hand these passions are a result of the Fall, but at the same time, through the glory of the Cross, they become the source of our salvation, perfection and glorification, and the means by which the devil is defeated and destroyed.
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> Paradoxically, the devil is destroyed by means of the very pas-

sions by which he attempts to destroy man. The most basic weapon with which Satan tries to destroy human beings is death, but through death Christ and the saints destroy the devil."

It should be noted at this point that the Triune God – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit – is present everywhere in the world according to energy but not according to essence. The God-man Christ, however, is absent from the world according to His essence as Word, but "the human nature of Christ is everywhere present according to essence", by reason of the hypostatic union of the divine and human natures. This issue is linked with the teaching about the essence and energy of God, but also about the hypostatic union of the divine and human natures in Christ.

"The foundation of this teaching is the actual experience of glorification. These distinctions that the Fathers of the Church make are not the outcome of philosophical speculation. They know from the experience itself that in the experience of glorification the one who is glorified is united with God according to energy."

At Christ's Baptism in the River Jordan, John the Forerunner was accounted worthy to experience the Triune God.

"It came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptised by John in the Jordan. And immediately, coming up from the water, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove. Then a voice came from heaven, 'You are My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased'" (Mark 1:9-11).

"For the Forerunner, at least for the day of the Baptism, this is the experience of glorification. When he saw the heavens opened and so on, this means that he had a revelation of the uncreated glory of Christ. That is also why we sing in the troparion of the Feast of Theophany that the Holy Trinity was revealed in the Baptism. How is the Holy Trinity revealed in the Baptism? Through the manifestation of the glory of God, which is the experience of glorification for John the Baptist."

4. The Revelation of the Uncreated Energies of Christ

After His Baptism in the River Jordan, Christ officially began His work. In fact, Christ manifested His divinity, His uncreated energies, through His human nature. After the incarnation of Christ, the revelation is connected with the God-man Christ.

The Apostles saw the energy of the uncreated nature in Christ through His miracles and His teaching. Later three of them saw the Light of His divinity on Tabor. The Body of Christ is a source of the uncreated energies of God.

> "It should be emphasised that in Christ's earthly life, He did not reveal His human nature, because we see His human nature. What needed revealing was Christ's uncreated nature, as everyone who saw Christ knew that He was a human being. What needed to be revealed was the uncreated nature of Christ: that He is of the same essence as the Father and the Holy Spirit, that His energies are the same, and that He Himself is uncreated according to hypostasis, uncreated according to essence and uncreated according to energy.
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> This revelation of the energies of Christ takes place in two ways. The first is by means of miracles. He works miracles and it is clear from the miracles that He is the source not only of created but of uncreated energies, as He performs miracles that only uncreated energy can accomplish. They result from uncreated energies, not from created energies. It would be possible for someone to believe that Christ is the means or organ by which the uncreated is revealed, without Himself being the source of uncreated energies. In other words, it could be supposed that God works through Christ as a man, and although Christ seems to work miracles, it is God Himself Who performs miracles by means of Christ. So with an Arian Christology we could still have miracles, just as we have miracles by means of the Prophets and so on.

The essence of the Orthodox teaching about Christ, however, is that Christ Himself is the Word of God, and Christ, as the Word of God, is not simply a means by which miracles are worked but the source of miracle-working energies. Because He is the Word Who became flesh, and there is reciprocal exchange of properties, the Word acts both as a man and as God. Thus Christ is not simply a vehicle for uncreated energies, but also a source of uncreated energies. This revelation of Christ's uncreated nature takes place principally through miracles. He works miracles that only God can work.

The second way is His teaching. He teaches things with the authority and power of God Himself. He teaches as God. We have the miracles and we have the teaching. The miracles are visible results of uncreated energies. So when someone sees the works, he can be convinced by what Christ says: *'Though you do not believe Me, believe the works'* (John 10:38), in other words, that the results that they produce are the results of uncreated energies. Believe this, as you do not believe in Me, since you see Me as a man."

Apart from His miracles and His teaching, there are occasions when Christ revealed the glory of His divinity as Light.

"If we look carefully at Holy Scripture, we see that there are three stages of teaching. Christ Himself says *'to those who are outside, all things come in parables.'* He teaches *'those who are outside'* in parables. But *'to you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom* [vasileia] *of God'* (Mark 4:11). The insiders, who are the Apostles, learn the mysteries of the glory and rule (*vasileia*) of God directly, without parables.

We have teaching in parables; we have teaching of the mysteries, that the mysteries of the glory and rule (*vasileia*) of God are the mysteries of the Church; and afterwards, apart from that, we have another level of learning the truth. This is what the Fathers call *theosis*-glorification or revelation of the rule and glory of God."

A preliminary transfiguration of Christ, a manifestation of the glory of Christ's divinity, took place in the case of the two disciples of John the Baptist. John the Evangelist relates:

"Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, 'Behold the Lamb of God!'

The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following said to them, 'What do you seek?' They said to Him, 'Rabbi' (which is to say, when translated, Teacher), 'where are You staying?' He said to them, 'Come and see.' They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (now it was about the tenth hour)" (John 1:35-40)

"When the two disciples of the Forerunner became Disciples of Christ, they asked Him, *'Where are You staying?'* (John 1:39) Does this mean that they asked Christ to show them His apartment? Of course not. They asked Him to show them where He dwelt. The Apostles asked Christ to reveal His dwelling-place, which is the uncreated glory of God. And for a whole day those Apostles participated in the experience of glorification. So here we have the first experience of glorification after the Forerunner. Just as the Forerunner had this experience of Christ, so His Disciples have this experience."

The greatest revelation of Christ's glory took place on Mount Tabor in the presence of His three Disciples, Peter, John and James. Here it is clear that Christ's Body is the created tabernacle that covered the divinity. This is the interpretation of the passage *"and dwelt* (literally: 'tabernacled') *among us'* (John 1:14).

"Christ takes the three leading Apostles and is transfigured before them. He reveals His glory and rule (*vasileia*) to the three Apostles in the presence of Elijah and Moses. Afterwards Peter makes that blunder and says: *'It is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles'* (Mark 9:5). He did not understand what sort of tabernacle they had. They now had the created tabernacle itself (the human nature), which replaces the other tabernacle that Moses made. So here, once again, we have an experience of glorification, because Christ's human nature is the source of uncreated glory."

The appearance of Moses and Elijah during the Transfiguration of Christ on Tabor shows that it was He Himself Who appeared unincarnate in the Old Testament, and Whom the representative of the Law (Moses) and the representative of the Prophets (Elijah) saw.

"We have the Transfiguration. The essence of Orthodox teaching

is there. The Apostles saw Christ revealing the uncreated divinity to them, and revealing that He is Christ Himself, Who had appeared to Moses and to Elijah, which is why they are present. This is the revelation. This is the dogma of the Holy Trinity, that Christ is Yahweh, the Lord of Glory, Who appears in the Old Testament and reveals the Father within Himself. This is the Holy Trinity."

"We have the same revelation in the New Testament as well, but now the human nature of Christ is added. At the Transfiguration we have a revelation of the glory of Christ by means of Christ's human nature, but also in the cloud which overshadowed the Apostles."

The mystery of the incarnation of the Son and Word of God is manifested on Mount Tabor, as the human nature is a source of the uncreated glory of God. The three Apostles were participants in this mystery of the incarnation.

"At the Transfiguration Christ incarnate is seen in glory. In the Old Testament the glory flowed from the Angel of the Lord, from the Lord of Glory, from the Angel of Great Counsel, in the Holy Spirit, and the one who was glorified had this direct contact with the Lord of Glory, with Yahweh. Now exactly the same happens in the New Testament at the Transfiguration, but now the human nature of Yahweh or the Angel of Glory, the Angel of Great Counsel, is interposed.

The uncreated Light, however, flows from the human nature of Christ. It is clear from this revelation that the human nature, this human nature of Christ, is not simply a bearer of God's glory, but also a source of God's glory, because the hypostatic union is natural and not according to grace, as is the case with an Apostle. We may see Moses in glory, but Moses is not a source of God's uncreated glory. He is a bearer of the uncreated glory of God. At the Transfiguration, however, the human nature is the source of glory. Christ is also plainly revealed as the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. Inasmuch as the Father is the source of glory, Christ is the source from the source. Thus the Father is the source, the Word is the source and the Holy Spirit is also the source.

We also know these things from the experience of glorification, not simply from reading Holy Scripture. One can track them down

by reading Holy Scripture, but the finishing touch to what one reads in Holy Scripture, if it is correctly interpreted, is the actual experience of glorification. Because someone who has the experience also knows what Holy Scripture says on this subject. Someone who does not have the experience can track these things down, if he follows the patristic interpretation. If, however, he follows the interpretation of a Protestant or Papal Christian, he will understand nothing about the Transfiguration of Christ.

That is why the Papal Church downgraded the Feast of the Transfiguration to a second-class feast a few years ago. It is no longer a Feast of the Lord, as it used to be, but a second-class feast now in the Papal Church. And if you read the interpretation given by Papal commentators on the subject of the Transfiguration – take, for instance, Daniélou, the great theologian of patristic theology in the Papal Church, and read what he writes about the Transfiguration – you will tear out your hair. Nonsense, absolute nonsense."

The three Disciples on Mount Tabor *"were transformed"*, they were changed, transfigured, *"and saw the transformation"*. No one can see the uncreated Light unless he is in a state of glorification, unless his bodily senses are also transformed. Thus the uncreated Light was seen by the Disciples through their glorification, that is to say, from within. They were within the Light and saw the Light. *"In Your light we shall see light."* But whereas the Light acted from within, through glorification, the theanthropic Body of Christ, which was the source of the uncreated Light, was outside the Disciples.

"The fact that the Apostles are able to see the uncreated Light streaming from the human nature of Christ as its source, means that the same uncreated Light also flows from the cloud. In other words, they are within the Light and see that Christ's human nature is the source of the Light which surrounds them. The body of Christ, however, does not illuminate the Apostles from within but from without. The body illuminates from outside but the Light illuminates from within. This is not the same thing.

A certain Russian has written that the Light illumines from outside and the body illumines from outside, but the Fathers say that light that illumines from outside is demonic. So from the way he

interprets the Transfiguration it could be concluded that the Apostles experienced demonic energy at the Transfiguration, as they were illuminated from outside."

"At the Transfiguration the glory of God is revealed to the Apostles in a curious manner. The source of the Light is Christ's flesh. So Christ's flesh, Christ's human nature, transmits the Light, and this Light becomes visible to the leading Apostles, who are accompanied by Elijah and Moses.

But we know the following: when someone has the experience of revelation he sees Light in the Light. *'In Your light we shall see light'* (Ps. 35[36]:10). That is to say, in order to see the Light one must be within the Light. So the uncreated Light can never be from outside."

"In the case of the Transfiguration, the glory of Christ is revealed from the human nature of Christ. Some of our own theologians, following a Russian theologian, have provided an interpretation that, according to St Gregory Palamas, the Light revealed from the human nature of Christ was outside the Apostles at the Transfiguration, whereas after Pentecost it came from within.

This is heresy, because if it is outside it is demonic. This action of the Apostles would be demonic, if this were so. It is from within, not from without. St Gregory Palamas himself stresses afterwards that the glory revealed from Christ's flesh is also revealed from the cloud, because the cloud itself is the glory of Christ. In the Old Testament, when we say *'pillar of fire'* and *'pillar of cloud'*, the word 'cloud' means glory.

This means that the Apostles not only saw the glory from Christ's human nature, but they saw this glory coming from Christ's human nature because they were within the glory. They were covered by the cloud, which is the glory and rule (*vasileia*) of God. The Light was from within, but the Body of Christ was outside. They were illumined from within; but in the same way as they had illumination from within, the flesh of Christ was also radiant, but with the same Light with which both they and the Body of Christ were illumined from within. The Light was not outside, only the Body of Christ was outside the Apostles at the Transfiguration."

The Light issuing from the human nature of the Word was the Light of the divinity, which is uncreated.

> "It does not have shape, structure or form, so it is said to be amorphous, shapeless and formless."

The three Disciples saw the Light of the divinity and became partakers of this Light. And since this Light is the glory and rule (*vasileia*) of God, the three Disciples also acquired participation in the glory and rule of God.

According to the Evangelists' account, as well as the testimony of the Apostle Peter, the three Disciples on Mount Tabor saw the glory of God pouring forth from the Body of Christ, heard the voice of the Father and saw the Holy Spirit by means of the radiant cloud. In any case, Christ is never separated from the Father and the Holy Spirit.

This is repeated in every experience of divine vision. During the vision of God, the saints do not see the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. They see 'a divinity of threefold Light', where the three have the same glory, the same Light, but also have something personal, that is to say, the particular hypostatic property. This is the 'unbegottenness' of the Father, the 'begottenness' of the Son and the 'procession' of the Holy Spirit. All three Persons have a common essence and energy, and Their energy is seen as Light.

The manifestation of Christ's glory on Mount Tabor was a significant event in the life of the Apostles and a key event in the life of the Church, as we shall see in the following chapters.

5. The Mystery of the Cross and Resurrection of Christ

Christ's sacrifice on the Cross on Golgotha, which is closely linked with Christ's Resurrection, is the central point of the teaching and life of the Church. In fact we speak of the mystery of the Cross and Resurrection of Christ, which refers to Christ's victory over sin, the devil and death.

A distinction is made between "the Crucifixion and Resurrection in the body of the incarnate Word of God" and "the mystery of the power of the Cross and Resurrection of Christ, of which the Prophets and some Apostles were witnesses before Christ's sacrifice on Golgotha". However, in spite of this distinction, there is a close connection between the mystery of the Cross and the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross on Golgotha.

St Isaac the Syrian, speaking of the Cross of Christ, writes that "the activity of taking up the cross is twofold." One action of the Cross "is called praxis" and is experienced as patience in the tribulations of the flesh, which is expressed in the incensive part of the soul. The other action "is called theoria" and consists of the subtle work of the nous. It is to be found in divine converse and constancy in prayer, which are accomplished in the appetitive part of the soul. Thus the Cross is praxis and theoria.

St Gregory Palamas also interprets this twofold energy of the mystery of the Cross: that the Cross was active in the Old Testament, as experienced by Abraham, Moses and the righteous in the Old Testament. Thus "the Cross of Christ is the abolition of sin". Through the Cross the righteous were reconciled with God, so "God Himself has borne witness that there were many who were His friends before and after the law, when the Cross had not yet been revealed." So "the Cross existed in the time of our ancestors, even before it was accomplished." It is obvious that "the Cross of Christ was mysteriously proclaimed in

advance and foreshadowed from generations of old and no one was ever reconciled with God except by the power of the Cross."

The Cross of God is His love, which is His uncreated energy.

> "The power of the Cross and Resurrection is God's love, which acts *'with God before the world was'*, in the creation and direction of the world, before the incarnation, during the incarnation, before the sacrifice on the Cross, during the sacrifice on the Cross and after it."
>
> "It is the loving energy of God, which *'does not seek its own'* (1 Cor. 13:5) and transcends every created category and every experience of men and angels, whether perceptible by the senses or the nous. It is also, however, a punitive power that destroys sin and the power of those opposed to God's will, and perfects, as far as this is possible, even the unrepentant enemies of God through their punishment."

Although the power of the Cross was also active in the Prophets and the righteous of the Old Testament through purification, illumination and glorification, it did not liberate them from death and the power of the devil, who acts through death. Christ's triumphant victory over the devil and death came about through His incarnation and, above all, through His sacrifice on the Cross and His Resurrection. Christ *"has made* [us] *alive together with Him, having forgiven* [us] *all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it"* (Col. 2:13-15).

The Apostle Paul, referring to the hidden wisdom of God, which God predetermined before the ages for our glory and which we preach *"in a mystery"*, writes that the rulers of this age did not know this wisdom, *"for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory"* (1 Cor. 2:7-8). The Lord of Glory is the Angel of Great Counsel in the Old Testament, the Word of God seen by the Prophets. This unincarnate Word took flesh and was crucified in the flesh. The crucified Christ is the Lord of Glory Himself, and is so called by virtue of the hypostatic union of the divine and human natures in the hypostasis of the Word and the mutual exchange of the properties of each nature.

The historical event of the Crucifixion of Christ on Golgotha discloses God's great love for humankind. This is clear from the fact that Christ Himself linked the incident in the Old Testament when Moses lifted up the serpent with His sacrifice on the Cross: *"Even so must the Son of Man be lifted up"*; but also with God's love: *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life"* (John 3:13-17).

The love of God, which was also expressed through the historical event of the Crucifixion, is man's reconciliation with God. This is the mystery of the Cross and the Resurrection of Christ.

> "God is not reconciled with man, but man with God through the mystery of the Cross, and through this reconciliation man is transformed from an enemy of God into His friend, and participates in the Resurrection of Christ."

God also loves those who are opposed to Him, but they cannot understand His love.

> "God never ceases to be a friend even to His enemies and to show them His love. He becomes an enemy and punitive energy only from the viewpoint of those opposed to His love, in accordance with their own will and perception."

Christ reconciled man with God by defeating the devil, sin and death. Thus man is saved through the mystery of the Cross and Resurrection of Christ. The mystery of the Cross, although it is distinct from Christ's sacrifice on the Cross, is nevertheless expressed by the Cross on Golgotha. All the same, the mystery of the Cross was not simply prefigured in the Old Testament but was also active, except that it could not set man free from *"him who had the power of death, that is, the devil"* (Heb. 2:15). This was accomplished through the Cross and Resurrection of Christ.

By sharing in the mystery of the Cross and Resurrection of Christ the believer is transformed and sanctified, as God's grace changes selfish love into unselfish love. In this way man is glorified "and becomes God's friend and collaborator, Christ's brother and joint-king by grace, and an adoptive son of the Virgin."

> "Without making one's own the mystery of Christ's Cross and

Resurrection, by which, through purification, illumination and glorification, man overcomes the selfishness or self-love rooted in the fear of death, it is impossible to reach participation in the glorifying love of God, by which one becomes His friend."

The mystery of the Cross is active in the Mystery of the Divine Eucharist and the whole spiritual life of the faithful.

"The power of the Cross and Resurrection of Christ makes the sacrifice on the Cross, that is to say, the power of the Resurrection, present in the Divine Eucharist and the Mysteries (Sacraments). Through the Divine Eucharist it brings about the reconciliation and nourishment of the faithful, and their spiritual growth and development towards glorification."

Participation in the mystery of the Cross and Resurrection of Christ comes about through combining the Mysteries with asceticism.

"Every believer must be voluntarily crucified, as Christ was crucified. Only through this voluntary crucifixion can participation in the mystery of the Cross be achieved, which transforms a selfish human being into a friend of God and god by grace."

The fundamental aim of the Mysteries and asceticism is to liberate man from sin. This comes about to varying degrees and at different levels. By purification man avoids sin, by illumination sin avoids him, and by theoria the nous becomes the dwelling-place of Christ, and through Him of the Father and the Holy Spirit. Then man is unaffected by the rational faculty, the passions and his surroundings.

Thus the mystery of Christ's Cross - the "immaterial Cross" - and Resurrection is the pre-eternal love of God for man, through which he is reconciled with God, unincarnate in the Old Testament, incarnate in the New Testament. Christ's sacrifice on the Cross on Golgotha and His Resurrection expressed God's all-surpassing love. Through His Cross and Resurrection, Christ defeated the devil and death and gave man the possibility of defeating him, when he is united with Him in His Body, the Church. Participation in the mystery of the Cross and Resurrection of Christ is achieved by the one who participates in the Mysteries and asceticism. He then becomes a friend of Christ, rejects love of self and acquires unselfish love.

Through various incidents and the manifestation of His glory on Mount Tabor, Christ prepared the Disciples to share in the mysteries of His Cross and Resurrection. In His high-priestly prayer He said to His Father: *"And the glory which You gave Me I have given them"* (John 17:22). Later He said: *"Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me"* (John 17:24).

"The fact that the Apostles have received glory is in the past, but they will see the glory in the future. They have received glory, but they will see glory. In other words, they have reached illumination and will progress to glorification. *'My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world'* (John 17:24). Of course three of them had already seen the glory at the Transfiguration, but they had been commanded not to say anything until He had risen. After the Resurrection they spoke about it and everyone found out.

'O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent me. And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them' (John 17:25-26). Here too *'I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it.'*

There are two things here: 'I have declared something' and 'I will declare something to them'. Well, we have learnt about illumination with the created names and so on, and now we shall progress to other knowledge. What are they going to discover? *'The love with which You loved Me'*, that it *'may be in them, and I in them'*.

In this way everything becomes very clear. Obviously, through the Resurrection and afterwards, with His appearances, Christ was revealed. But to whom was He revealed? Christ appeared only to the faithful; He did not appear to Pilate or Caiaphas or Caesar or anyone else. The appearances were only to the faithful.

All those apologists who try to prove the Resurrection of Christ with worldly arguments – those arguments are drivel, because these people do not know the difference between Christ according to the flesh and Christ according to the Spirit. The Apostles knew Christ according to the flesh, but now they no longer know Him according

to the flesh; they know Him according to the Spirit. What does knowing according to the Spirit mean? Whoever has the Spirit, anyone who is a temple of God, according to St Basil the Great, knows Him according to the Spirit."

"All Christ's appearances after the Resurrection are experiences of glorification. No one sees Christ any more except those who attain to His glory, to glorification. That is why the whole of the fifteenth chapter of the Epistle to the Corinthians is about those who have reached glorification."

After His Resurrection Christ appeared to the Disciples, who had been suitably prepared, in order to bring them to perfection.

"When Christ rises again He does not to appear to everyone. He appears to His Disciples. He had prepared them by means of illumination and He appears to them. For what purpose? In order to make them perfect, as He does to all those who reach illumination, for their glorification."

After His Resurrection Christ appeared to His Disciples, not to His enemies, because the Disciples knew Christ according to the flesh and were worthy also to know Him risen. Of course, they will know Him according to the Spirit at Pentecost.

Forty days after His Resurrection Christ ascended into heaven. This means that Christ's human nature, which had been glorified from His conception, cast off mortality and corruptibility at the Resurrection, and thus He sat on the right hand of God at the Ascension.

In Christ's last address to His Disciples one of the things He said was: *"Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper* [Paraclete, Comforter] *will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you"* (John 16:7). The Ascension of Christ had to take place so that at Pentecost the Disciples would know Him according to the Spirit, that is to say, in the Holy Spirit, and become members of His Risen Body.

"He goes to God as He had already explained: I must go away, I must go away (see John 14:28; 16:5, 7, 10, 16, 17 etc.), so that everything may be completed and you may have joy (see John 15:11; 16:20, 22; 17:13). Why did He have to go away? The Ascension had

to take place so that He could come back at Pentecost, so that the Body could come into being, and so that each Apostle could have the Risen Christ living within him from then on."

Through the Mysteries and the ascetic life the believer lives spiritually the mystery of Christ's becoming man, as the holy Fathers teach. He experiences the incarnation of Christ through faith. By the pains of asceticism he lives through the pregnancy; by Baptism and Chrismation he experiences Christ's birth and Baptism; through the Divine Eucharist he experiences Christ's teaching and Holy Communion; through purification of the heart he is crucified together with Christ; through the various degrees of theoria he lives the Transfiguration, the Resurrection and the Ascension. This experience of the stages of the divine Economy takes place in *"the inner man"* (Eph. 3:16). It is linked with the Christian's spiritual rebirth and comes about to different degrees and in various combinations.

In the next section we shall look at the subject of Pentecost and the foundation of the Church as the Body of Christ. This is closely connected with Christ's incarnation, because the work of Christ is the same as the work of the Holy Spirit. Christ sends the Holy Spirit, Who proceeds from the Father, and the Holy Spirit forms Christ in the hearts of Christians, and we know the Father through Christ

Part 5

The Church as the Body of Christ and a Community of Glorification

The Church as the Body of Christ and a Community of Glorification

Through His incarnation the Son and Word of God entered history. The divine nature was united with the human nature in His hypostasis immutably, without change, indivisibly and inseparably; in His Body man's salvation is brought about. The unincarnate Word of the Old Testament takes flesh: *"the Word became flesh and dwelt among us"* (John 1:14).

The Church existed even before the creation of angels and human beings. After the fall of Adam and Eve, the Church survived in the Patriarchs and the righteous of the Old Testament, who progressed as far as the vision of God. In the Old Testament the Church was spiritual, whereas through Christ's incarnation is becomes 'bodily' – the Body of Christ. At the centre of the Church now there is, on the one hand, the Divine Eucharist, during which we eat and drink the Body and Blood of Christ, and, on the other, ecclesiastical life as a whole, that is to say, the Mysteries (Sacraments), prayer, dogmas and teaching.

Aspects of this mystery of the Church as the Body of Christ and a community of glorification will be highlighted in the sections that follow.

1. Uncreated and Created Church

The Church is a mystery and must be approached as such. It is not a human organisation but the theanthropic organism. We know the Church as the Body of Christ, in accordance with the Apostle Paul's teaching. Over and above that, however, the Church is the uncreated glory and rule (*vasileia*), where God dwells, and where His friends are also invited to dwell. Thus the Church is uncreated and created, but its createdness receives the uncreated grace of God.

First of all, the Church is the uncreated glory of God.

> "Even before the creation the uncreated Church existed, as the glory and rule (*vasileia*) hidden in God, in which God dwells with the Word and the Holy Spirit."

In this case the Church is uncreated: it is the uncreated glory of the Triune God, the Jerusalem above, as the mother of us all (Gal. 4:26). That is why our citizenship *"is in heaven"* (Phil. 3:20). Consequently, like the glory and rule (*vasileia*) of God, the Church *"is not of this world"* (John 18:36). Subsequently, through this uncreated glory of the Triune God, the world was created, where the uncreated heavenly Church is manifested.

> "By the resolution of God the ages were created, with the heavenly powers and the bodiless noetic powers or angels that live in them. Then time was created and the world within it, in which man was also created, uniting in himself the noetic energy of the angels with reason (*logos*) and the human body."

Adam and Eve in Paradise before the Fall, as we have seen already, lived in this uncreated glory and rule (*vasileia*) of the Triune God – the Church. After their Fall, however, they lost their participation in the glory and rule of God. The Church is preserved in the righteous and the Prophets of the Old Testament, but at the same time they are under the domination of death.

The incarnation of Christ manifested this uncreated Church in the glorified Body of Christ, which becomes a source of God's uncreated grace and energy. This is clear, as we shall see below, from the fact that, just as the uncreated grace of God "is indivisibly divided among divided beings" and "is multiplied without becoming many", the same happens with the Body of Christ in the Mystery (Sacrament) of the Divine Eucharist.

All those who live in the uncreated Church, which is now more perfectly manifested in the flesh of Christ, are sanctified by sharing in God's uncreated grace and pass to the uncreated glory and rule (*vasileia*) of God, Paradise, the heavenly Church, the uncreated glory of the Holy Trinity. With these presuppositions we say that the Church is the glory and rule of God. This is not a created reality but uncreated glory.

So the Church is uncreated and created, as it is uncreated glory and also the created human nature that Christ assumed. However, this created human nature that Christ assumed and glorified shares in the uncreated grace of the divine nature, by virtue of the hypostatic union of the divine and human natures in His hypostasis, and it too becomes a source of uncreated grace. All those who are united with Christ become partakers of the uncreated glory of God. They are glorified according to grace and become 'without beginning' and uncreated according to grace. This comes about through the mystery of Pentecost.

2. The Mystery of Pentecost

After Christ's Ascension into heaven, as He had affirmed, on the fiftieth day after His Resurrection and the tenth after His Ascension, He sent the Holy Spirit, Who proceeds from the Father.

Christ Himself had announced to the Disciples beforehand the sending of the Holy Spirit: *"And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper* [Paraclete, Comforter], *that He may abide with you forever – the Spirit of truth, Whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you"* (John 14:16-17). Immediately afterwards He said: *"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you"* (John 14:26). Later He said: *"It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you"* (John 16:7).

The coming of the Holy Spirit to the Disciples took place on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-13). Pentecost had a significant place in the life of the Apostles. Having previously passed through purification of the heart and illumination – something that also existed in the Old Testament in the Prophets and the righteous – they then saw the Risen Christ, and on the day of Pentecost they became members of the risen Body of Christ. This is particularly important because every Apostle had to have the Risen Christ within Him.

At Pentecost the Holy Spirit made the Disciples members of the theanthropic Body of Christ. Whereas at the Transfiguration the Light acted from within the three Disciples, through glorification, but the Body of Christ was outside them, at Pentecost the Disciples are united with Christ. They become members of the theanthropic Body and as members of the Body of Christ they share in the uncreated Light. This difference also exists between the Old Testament and Pentecost.

"All those who saw Christ's glory before the Ascension saw it twice. On the one hand they were covered by the cloud, because *'In Your light we shall see light'* (Ps. 35[36]:10). They were covered by the radiant cloud and, being within the uncreated Light, they see the uncreated Light. However, the human nature of Christ is also a source of the Light, as at the Transfiguration.

The human nature of Christ is a source of Light. The Apostles saw this Light, since they are within the Light, as they are glorified. That is to say, *'In Your light we shall see light'*. That they are within the Light is shown by the fact that they were covered by the radiant cloud and also saw Christ's human nature as a source of Light. The Light shone from within, but from the body it shone from outside. The Light shone from within, but the Body of Christ, which transmitted the Light, the same Light, was outside. Starting from Pentecost, however, the human nature of Christ sends out the Light 'now from within'. So there is no experience of the Light from outside, unless there is also an experience of Christ within. The two are now interlinked. In other words, the one is now the same as the other."

"Why was it necessary for the Ascension to happen and for the Holy Spirit to descend? What was the purpose? Why do we say that the Church was established on the day of Pentecost? The Church was not established on the day of Pentecost. The Church had been established since the time when God called Abraham and the Patriarchs and the Prophets. The Church was established from then. The Church exists in the Old Testament. The Church existed in Hades. But here the Church takes shape: the Church is established in the sense that from now on it is established as the Body of Christ."

This is an important point because it shows that Pentecost is the birthday of the Church as the Body of Christ, and also that all who are united with the Body of Christ overcome death.

"In the Old Testament there is reconciliation and friendship with God and glorification. Everything is in the Old Testament, the difference being that there is no Pentecost. The Church exists in the Old Testament, but under the domination of death.

What is Pentecost? The revelation of all truth. At that point the Church becomes the Body of Christ, which is why on the day of

Pentecost we also celebrate the birthday of the Church that has risen in Christ."

"On the day of Pentecost Christ comes in the Holy Spirit. The energies of God are present in the world and whoever is in communion with God's energy understands that through His energies God is indivisibly divided and is multiplied without becoming many. Thus someone who is in communion with God does not have a fragment of God. The whole of God is present in each human being and is present everywhere throughout the world.

At Pentecost Christ's human nature returns from now on to the Church. This is the day on which the Church was founded, because Christ's human nature is now indivisibly divided, and the whole of Christ, with His human nature, is in every believer.

This is the Church, where every believer is a temple; not only a temple of the Holy Spirit, but also the Body of Christ, having the whole of Christ within him. This is the new way in which the human nature of Christ is present in the world. That is why Pentecost is also regarded as the day on which the Church was established. All who reach glorification share in this experience of Pentecost. We have examples in Holy Scripture itself: all those who saw Christ after the Resurrection, and those who have seen Christ since Pentecost up until today."

Pentecost is called 'the final feast' because it is the last phase of the incarnation of Christ. A great change now takes place, because the glorified are united in the Holy Spirit with the God-man Christ.

"The final, efficacious, phase was Pentecost. There the great change came about. Whereas the Spirit dwelt in the Prophets, as the Prophets had the Spirit of God, noetic prayer and glorification, from Pentecost onwards this indwelling of the Holy Spirit in someone who is divinely inspired comes about with the human nature of Christ as well. That is why the Church is now the Body of Christ. In other words, the Church became the Body of Christ on the day of Pentecost. And Christ, as man, now dwells within man.

This means permanent participation from now on in the glory of God. We now have permanent glorification, not temporary glorifi-

cation, as the Prophets who reached glorification had, when it was glory that passes away, and they died. Now the deified do not die.

This is the difference. What is different in the 'Pentecostal' experience is that the Church becomes the Body of Christ on the day of Pentecost; but it also makes the glorified permanent."

Starting from Pentecost God is partaken of, without being shared, by everyone in the Body of Christ. The presence of God is powerful.

"The mystery of the presence of God in the world, as described by the Fathers, is that God's uncreated energy is indivisibly divided among divided beings. It is shared out to each one, but without being divided among separate entities. This means that it is shared out like the Holy Bread in the Divine Eucharist. We say: 'Being broken yet not divided, being ever eaten yet never consumed' and so on. This is exactly the same thing. What happens in the Divine Eucharist with regard to the Body of Christ is exactly what happens with the energy of God as well. It is indivisibly divided among individuals.

When someone who is glorified is in communion with the uncreated energy of God, he does not have a fragment of God within him – as if God could be broken up into pieces, so that each of us would have a portion of God – because God cannot be divided up. Nevertheless He is divided and multiplied, but without multiplying.

These contradictions are not a figure of speech. This is the mystery of God's presence in the world. God in His entirety is omnipresent, in everything, everywhere, without being divided, and He is divided without division. This is the mystery. This mode of God's presence in the world, particularly in the glorified, starts for the first time from the Ascension and Pentecost.

When Christ returns to the Church in the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, Christ's human nature now shares this characteristic of being indivisibly divided among individuals. For that reason, when we take Holy Communion in the Divine Eucharist, one does not receive the finger, another the foot, another the nose and ear, but at the Divine Eucharist everyone receives the whole of Christ within him.

This is the mystery of Pentecost, which is why Pentecost is regarded as the Church's birthday. It is the Church of Pentecost that is born, although the Church existed in the Old Testament. The

Church, in its fullest sense, is the uncreated Church, the glory of God, the uncreated dwelling where God abides and where we should also abide. This dwelling multiplies, so there are many dwellings, as Christ says in the New Testament. There is one dwelling, yet many dwellings. Why? Because it is indivisibly divided among individuals. This is the mystery of Pentecost."

In addition, on the day of Pentecost, the Disciples attained to *"all truth"*. Before His Passion, Christ told His Disciples: *"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth"* (John 16:12-13).

These words of Christ are closely linked with the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, with the revelation of the whole truth, which the Disciples were unable to bear; they could not receive it earlier, without the Holy Spirit.

This *"all truth"* revealed on the day of Pentecost to the Apostles is the truth of the Church as the Body of Christ: that the Disciples will become members of this rise Body and that in the Church they will know the mysteries of the glory and rule (*vasileia*) of God in the flesh of Christ. On the day of Pentecost they knew the whole truth. It follows that the complete truth does not exist outside the Church. The Church has the truth, because it is the Body of Christ and a community of glorification.

"Apart from Christ's teaching and miracles, we also have another kind of revelation, which is the essence of the teaching of Holy Scripture on revelation.

As Christ teaches the Apostles and prepares them, He reaches the point when He tells them that He also has other things to reveal to them, but they cannot bear them now. *'However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth'* (John 16:13).

In the patristic tradition these words *'He will guide you into all truth'* were fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, so on that day *'all truth'* is revealed. This means that Christ Himself (before His Resurrection) did not reveal all the truth to the Apostles. Why not? Because they could not bear all the truth. They were not yet sufficiently prepared."

This truth, which the Holy Spirit revealed to the Disciples on the day of Pentecost, is that the Church is the Body of Christ and the Disciples will become members of the Body of Christ. There is no other truth beyond that truth.

"This is the key to the patristic interpretation, that He will send another Comforter, Who will *'guide you into all truth'*. What is this *'all truth'*? In the Old Testament we have the unincarnate Christ Who was revealed. After that we have the incarnate Christ, Who is revealed and Who reveals Himself through human words, but is also revealed through His glory to some Apostles, to certain Disciples. Then we come to the Resurrection. And after the Resurrection He is revealed now in glory to His Disciples, to the women, and so on. We have all these appearances of Christ after the Resurrection. Later we have the Ascension, and then we have Pentecost.

Now, at Pentecost, we have a change in the Church. In the Old Testament the Church is the people of God, which is made up of those who pass through purification and reach illumination. Some of them get as far as glorification and become leaders of Israel, Prophets and Patriarchs. We have the same thing in the New Testament until the Ascension. Afterwards something happens that gives the Church of the Old Testament and of the New Testament, up until then, a new dimension.

Before that, God is indivisibly divided among separate people, which means that He appears to every glorified human being as God in His entirety, in His glory. The Prophets are not in communion with a fragment of God, because God is not fragmented, but is indivisibly divided among divided beings. So we have this paradoxical mystery concerning God's presence in the Old Testament. In every action in which God multiplies Himself, without becoming many, God is wholly present in each action. He is present according to energy, but absent according to essence. He is present by His will, but absent in essence. He is both absent and present. Divided and undivided. Whole in every case, the same everywhere.

At Pentecost the distribution of the energies of the Holy Spirit takes place, so that the entire energy of the Holy Spirit is present in each Apostle. One tongue for each Apostle. With the descent of the

Holy Spirit, however, we also have the descent of Christ. That is to say, it is like a second incarnation. The Church is changed into the Body of Christ.

So anyone nowadays who progresses from purification to illumination is not only a temple of the Holy Spirit, as were the Prophets in the Old Testament. He is not only a Church as the temple of God, but he is also a Church as the dwelling-place of Christ's human nature. Every believer who is in the state of illumination has the whole of Christ within him.

For that reason we also have the reflection of this fact in the Mystery (Sacrament) of the Divine Eucharist, when the bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ, but the whole of Christ is present in every particle of the Holy Bread and Wine. The communicant does not receive a fragment of Christ when he takes Holy Communion. He receives the whole of Christ within himself. Thus we say, 'Broken and distributed is the Lamb of God, being broken yet not divided, being ever eaten yet never consumed...'

This prayer, which the priest reads at the Mystery of the Divine Eucharist, is the key to the mystery of Pentecost. This is *'all truth'*, which has now been revealed. After this revelation of the truth nothing more is revealed. That is to say, on the day of Pentecost the mystery of the Church, with its new dimension, was revealed. This was revealed, nothing else.

So the words *'He will guide you into all truth'* were fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. Therefore, in the interpretation of the Fathers, chapters 15, 16 and 17 of John were all fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. This is the patristic interpretation concerning Pentecost."

"According to the Fathers of the Church, *'all truth'* on the day of Pentecost also refers, of course, to the revelation that the Holy Spirit is a hypostasis, that He has His own hypostasis, as do the Father and the Word. In addition, though, the fact that the Body of Christ, which was outside and was revealed to people from outside, this Body of Christ is inside from the day of Pentecost onwards. The Body of Christ itself is inside man.

At the Transfiguration the Body was outside. The revelation comes from inside as well, but the Body is outside. Now, however,

the Body is inside. And the reason why the day of Pentecost is regarded as the birthday of the Church is that from then onwards the Church becomes the Body of Christ. In other words, Christ dwells within believers also as man. We have the founding of the Church from this point of view.

We can summarise by saying that we have a full revelation in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament we have a revelation of the truth, from the point of view of the dogma of the Holy Trinity. Later we have the revelation in Christ of the incarnation. After that we have the revelation of the divinity of Christ, when Christ reveals Himself, not only through words, sayings and miracles, but also by revealing His divinity through the experience of glorification. Subsequently, the final form of the revelation is on the day of Pentecost, when not only the Light shines within man, but also the human nature of Christ shines within those who reach the experience of glorification.

From Pentecost onwards, anyone who reaches perfection passes through the stages of purification and illumination, and when he arrives at glorification, he reaches the same experience – to varying degrees, of course – that the Apostles had on the day of Pentecost."

"We have the finishing touch to the teaching of the Gospel of John at the Feast of Pentecost, which is the supreme fulfilment of the Gospel of John. After that we have the finishing touch to Pentecost with the Sunday of All Saints, which is the fruit of Pentecost. The fruit of Pentecost is that the members of the Church are made into saints. We speak now about becoming a saint as though it were only for a few extraordinary monks. In those days it was definitely the aim of all Christians: to progress from purification to illumination and so on.

This is the context in which we see the Fathers of the Church telling us that the Holy Spirit *'will guide... into all truth'*, and that this was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. Everything that Christ taught before the Passion in chapters 14, 15 and 16 of John has now been accomplished."

When someone who knows Christ *"face to face"* from experience

and has unceasing inner prayer reads the Old Testament, he sees Christ everywhere, and he sees that the Prophets have experience of noetic prayer and theoria of the Angel of Great Counsel, the Angel of Glory. And he is capable of interpreting the Old Testament.

"What is important is that from Pentecost onwards, when Christ's human nature shares in the energy of God, which is indivisibly divided among individuals, the whole Christ dwells in every believer, but only if Christ has been 'formed' in him. The Apostle Paul uses this term. Christ is 'formed' in each one. This comes about through prayer.

It follows that this man has Christ within him and is a temple of the Holy Spirit. He is the Body of Christ and participates in the gift of grace of Pentecost. For that reason, as he knows Christ personally within him and is a temple of God, he reads the Old Testament and understands it. Because he sees what the Prophets saw. Each one had this personal contact with Christ, but again through prayer. This is the prophetic gift."

In Western theology, however, Christ's words, that the coming of the Holy Spirit would reveal *"all truth"* to them, were differently interpreted.

"In the Augustinian tradition, Augustine interpreted this passage from John, what Christ says to the Apostles, as meaning not only that the individual is led *'into all truth'*, but also that the Church is gradually led into the whole truth.

For the Fathers, the Apostles were led *'into all truth'* on the day of Pentecost, when the revelation was completed, and there is nothing beyond Pentecost. Everyone who reaches glorification is led into all truth, because he shares in the experience of glorification of Pentecost. This means that the work of the theologians of the Church is not to improve or delve more deeply into the teaching of the Church, as Papal Christians and certain Protestants suppose, but is something very different."

"This whole problem about the gradually deepening understanding of the faith by the Church itself is the line taken by the Papal Church. According to the Papal Church, with the passage of

time, the Church itself comes to a better understanding of the faith. For us, however, the deepest understanding of the faith that surpasses understanding is Pentecost."

"We have Pentecost, when *'all truth'* was revealed. There is no 'prophecy' about things to come; 'prophecy' from now on is the interpretation of the Prophets' prophecy. What does one need, however, in order to interpret the Prophets correctly? Noetic prayer."

"There is no understanding beyond Pentecost. Every glorification is a repeat of Pentecost within the Church. And this experience of Pentecost goes beyond understanding, beyond words and concepts, because in this experience both words and concepts are abolished, though not in the sense that they are wiped out, as the words and concepts remain as a form of expression. The one who is glorified has a knowledge that surpasses knowledge, but he uses both words and concepts to speak to other people."

"There is no deeper understanding beyond this experience of Pentecost. Essentially, the experience of Pentecost surpasses understanding and expression. I repeat what St Gregory the Theologian says: 'It is impossible to express God and even more impossible to conceive Him.'

Those who have experience of Pentecost and glorification neither express God nor understand God, because the experience transcends understanding and expression. All the same, Pentecost is expressed, in the sense that, although we do not pass on the revelation to others, because this experience is a revelation, we do pass on things **about** the revelation."

Another important point connected with the mystery of Pentecost is Christ's prayer to the Father that the Disciples may acquire unity between themselves. In His high-priestly prayer Christ says: *"that they may be one as We are"* (John 17:11). Elsewhere He says, *"And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one"* (John 17:22). Further on He prays: *"I desire that they... may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me"* (John 17:24). Of course, beholding this glory they will become perfect: *"that they may be made perfect in one"* (John 17:23).

"*'Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world'* (John 17:24). *'Where I am'*, as He said previously: *'I go to prepare a place for you'* (John 14:2). This place is the glory of God. So the glory that *'I have given them'*, the glory that they have already received, refers to something different. Afterwards He speaks about the place: where I shall be they too will be. What does this mean? *'That they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.'* The Apostles received glory in the past, but they will see the glory in the future. They have received glory, but they will see glory. In other words, they have reached illumination and will progress to glorification."

"Christ prays this for the future. Now, all our own people and the Protestants believe that He is praying for the union of the Churches. It has nothing to do with that. He is praying for glorification. It is a glorification prayer. *'That they may be one as We are'* (John 17:11). As We have one glory, they too will be united among themselves, as they will have the same glory. So all together we become one with each other, and one with God, because all of us, we and the Holy Trinity, have the same glory. This means unity in the glory of God."

At Pentecost the Apostles saw the glory of God as members of the Body of Christ, as they had become in the Holy Spirit, and received the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The Apostles received the tongues of fire and acquired the gift of teaching. They spoke to the people and the people heard the revelational teaching in their own language.

"At Pentecost, first the Apostles had the gift of tongues and then they spoke. A whole tongue, the grace of the Holy Spirit, descended upon each Apostle. Afterwards, however, the result of this gift was that they spoke and preached to the people. The people did not see the tongues; the Apostles received the tongues and spoke to the people. Everybody understood in his own dialect, even in Arabic, what the Apostles were saying. Everyone heard in his own language.

The Apostle Paul writes to the Corinthians, *'For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one under-*

stands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries' (1 Cor. 14:2). It seems that even at Pentecost no one heard the gift of the tongue that each Apostle received, but they heard the preaching of the Apostle and understood in their own language."

The experience of Pentecost is the greatest experience of divine vision.

"The experience of Pentecost is the supreme experience of glorification, before the Second Coming. There is nothing higher than Pentecost."

"Why in Orthodox theology can there be no further revelation after Pentecost, but the revelation came to an end with Pentecost and there are no other revelations? Every time someone reaches the experience of glorification, the same experience of Pentecost is repeated. One can reach the experience of Pentecost. One cannot reach any other experience, because the revelation comes to an end: all truth is revealed at Pentecost."

Another important point connected with the mystery of Pentecost is that, although the experience of Pentecost is a unique event in the history of the Church, people who have the appropriate prerequisites ascend to the same height as the experience of Pentecost. Thus the mystery of Pentecost is repeated down through the centuries.

"After Pentecost all the experiences of glorification are on a scale: higher or lower within the framework of the experience of Pentecost. The same experience is always repeated in the glorified throughout the life of the Church. This experience produces holy relics and the entire worship and devotion of the Orthodox Church which, I very much fear, simple believers understand better than at least some theologians. Those who feel reverence for relics understand or sense something of this phenomenon of holy relics. This repetition of the experience of Pentecost within the history of the Church is the backbone both of ecclesiastical history and the history of dogmas in the Orthodox Church."

"According to patristic tradition, this experience of Pentecost is repeated even after Pentecost. The first example that we have is from Holy Scripture, in the case of Cornelius, who attained to the

gift of tongues and the glorification of Pentecost, and for that reason Peter baptised him.

When he was called to account by the conservative Hebrews, he described the experience of Cornelius, that before being baptised Cornelius had *'the same gift'* (Acts 11:17) as the Apostles. The Apostle Peter himself tells us that Cornelius, before he was baptised, had the same grace that the Apostles had on the day of Pentecost. I would ask you to take the *Acts of the Apostles* and read very carefully what it says about Pentecost and the two chapters referring to Cornelius, to see that they are the same (see Acts ch. 10-11).

Holy Scripture bears witness that there is Pentecost after Pentecost, and it is in the lives of those who reach glorification. Throughout the course of the history of the Church we have innumerable examples of people who reach the same experience of Pentecost as the Apostles, Cornelius and others reached.

From a geographical point of view, these things not only happen in the East but in the West as well, because the experience of Pentecost also exists in the West, at least until the Middle Ages. If you want to see examples of this, take the lives of the saints, especially those preserved from the era of the Merovingian Franks in the Papal States of the West. Here we not only have the testimony of John Cassian, but particularly of Gregory of Tours, who wrote many lives of saints, in which this experience of glorification is clearly to be seen. We also have examples of people in the West who attained to such holiness that their bodies were preserved. Thus we have holy relics and all the consequences associated with the experience of glorification.

We observe the strange phenomenon that, although we have holy relics in the West, we have, by contrast, the scholastic theology of the Franks of the Middle Ages, which does not completely go along with this experience of glorification."

"As every experience of glorification is a repetition of Pentecost, and in every age people have reached this experience, from this point of view, who are all these saints of the Church, and what is the highest understanding of Orthodoxy? If it is not Pentecost, what is it? The Pope of Rome? Or is it a Protestant who has no idea what he is talking about and who interprets Holy Scripture?"

Certainly the experience of Pentecost is a mystery and is not connected with reason.

"Orthodox theology is circular in form. It is like a circle. Wherever you touch the circle, you know the whole circle, because the whole of the circle is the same. Everything leads up to Pentecost: the Mysteries of the Church, such as Ordination, Marriage, Baptism, Confession etc., the decisions of the Councils and so on. That is the key to Orthodox theology: Pentecost. So someone who reaches glorification after Pentecost is led *'into all truth'*.

What is *'all truth'*? It is something that transcends man's reason. It includes Christ's human nature and dwells within the one who has reached illumination and glorification. The whole mystery of the incarnation and the Holy Trinity, concerning divine grace, the cure of the human personality, salvation in the past in the Old Testament, about the future and the Second Coming: all these things are included in the mystery of Pentecost.

For that reason, Orthodox theology is amazingly simple. It is a different matter if necessity dictates, when dealing with heretics, that the one who speaks on behalf of Orthodoxy should be familiar with heretics and have a good knowledge of philosophy and so on. This, however, is not the essence of Orthodox theology. The essence of Orthodox theology is purification, illumination and glorification."

"There is no understanding beyond Pentecost. Certainly the rational faculty participates in this experience – the body participates in this experience – but God and the incarnation and the human nature of Christ, which is the source of Light due to the incarnation of the Word in human nature: all these remain mysteries. They cannot be understood philosophically or speculatively."

Because the experience of glorification and Pentecost continues down through the centuries, Pentecost is also the basis of the real history of the Church. When in any era there are saints who reach glorification in the experience of Pentecost, that age is described as a 'golden age' of the Church.

"Whenever an Orthodox Christian reaches illumination, he is already participating in the results of the experience of glorification. Illumination gives a foretaste of this experience, and it will be per-

fected when he reaches glorification. So in my opinion 'the golden age' can be described as follows. When the majority of Christians reach illumination and purification of the heart, and many of them also reach glorification, we have a 'golden age'. So this is the criterion for judging where we are. Were the Christians in this position in the early centuries? They certainly were. The many relics of Martyrs that we have from that period bear witness to this."

Consequently, the centre of the Pentecost-revelation is Christ, Whom the Prophets experienced as unincarnate and the Apostles and Fathers as incarnate. This is the essence of the Orthodox tradition.

3. The One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church

In the Creed we confess that the Church is *"One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic"*.

It is **One** because it is the Body of Christ; it is **Holy** because it is sanctified by its Head and all who are connected with it are sanctified; it is **Catholic** (Universal) because it possesses *"all truth"* and complete praxis, but also because also because it is spread throughout the world; and it is **Apostolic** because it is based on the Apostles, and all members of the Church have the apostolic tradition and the clergy have the apostolic succession.

As mentioned earlier, the Church existed even before the incarnation, but it was unincarnate, spiritual, the uncreated glory and rule (*vasileia*) of the Triune God. After the incarnation of Christ and Pentecost the Church became the Body of Christ.

This uncreated glory saves the faithful, who are united with the Church through the Mysteries (Sacraments).

> "The Church is the Body of Christ, which is made up of those who believe in Christ, who share in the first resurrection, have the pledge of the Spirit, or even a foretaste of glorification."

The first resurrection is participation in the uncreated grace of God through the holy Mysteries, while the human being is still living his biological life and is a member of the Church. The second resurrection is the experience of the glorifying energy of God after death.

> "All who have the pledge of the Spirit and the glorified are members of the Church."

Living Christians, who receive the grace of the Holy Spirit as a betrothal, and the departed saints, who experience spiritual marriage, belong to the Church.

"The Church, as the Body of Christ, is the dwelling-place of God's uncreated glory. We cannot separate Christ from the Church, or the Church from Christ.

In Papal Christianity and Protestantism a clear distinction is made between the Body and the Church. Someone can partake of the Body of Christ without being a member of the Papal Church. This is impossible for the Orthodox Church."

That is why there are no Churches outside the One Church, just as a member of the body cannot live when it is cut of from the whole organism of the body.

"The Church is visible and invisible. The view that prevails among Protestants is that the Church is only invisible, so the Mysteries of Baptism and the Divine Eucharist are only symbolic acts, and God alone knows its real members. The Orthodox Church, by contrast, also emphasises that the Church is visible."

The saints know from experience that the visible and invisible elements of the Church co-exist. The appearance of many saints to living members of the Church who are glorified demonstrates this fact. For that reason all those who have personal experience have true knowledge of what the Church is.

"According to the Calvinists, since the Ascension Christ lives in heaven, so it is impossible for the bread and wine to turn into the real Body and Blood of Christ. Christ is completely absent. The Papal Church stresses more or less the same thing, because through the prayers of the Priest, although Christ is not present, He now descends from heaven and becomes present. Thus Christ is absent from the Church."

In Papal Christianity there is a clear distinction between the Body of Christ, in which the Pope is Christ's representative, and the Eucharistic Bread. This view, however, is untenable according to the patristic tradition. According to the Fathers of the Church, the Body of the Church is the same as the Eucharistic Bread.

The catholicity of the Church is expressed by every local Church. Each individual part is the whole. The same happens in the Mystery of the Divine Eucharist. When we receive a particle of the Eucharistic

Bread, we partake of the whole of Christ. The same is true of the Church, which is the Body of Christ.

Every local Church is the whole of the Church in miniature. This means, of course, that every local Church, in order to be catholic (universal), must preserve *"all truth"* and all the praxis that confirms the truth and leads to the experience of the truth.

> "In the early Church, when they spoke about the Body of Christ and about Christ as the Head of the Church, they did not mean that Christ was spread physically throughout the world and that, for instance, His head was in Rome, one hand was in the East and the other in the West, but that the whole of Christ was in every particular Church with all its members, that is to say, in all the saints and faithful in the world.
>
> So when we celebrate the Divine Eucharist, according to the teaching of the Fathers, not only is Christ present but so are all the saints, together with all the Christians in the world. When we partake of a small portion of the Holy Bread we receive the whole of Christ within us. When Christians gather together the whole Church gathers together, not just a part of it. That is why in the patristic tradition the church of a Monastery is called the *Katholikon*."

The dogmas, as the formulation of revelational truth, are very closely linked with the Mysteries. Orthodox theology is identical with the Mysteries.

> "Where Orthodox dogma is absent the Church is not in a position to pronounce on the validity of the Mysteries. According to the Fathers, Orthodox dogma is never separated from spirituality. Where dogma is mistaken, spirituality is also mistaken, and vice versa. Many people separate dogma from piety. This is wrong. When Christ says *'You shall be perfect as the Father is perfect'*, it implies that we ought to know the meaning of perfection.
>
> The criterion for the validity of the Mysteries for us Orthodox is Orthodox dogma, whereas for non-Orthodox it is the apostolic succession. In the Orthodox tradition it is not enough to trace back ordination to the Apostles; we must have Orthodox dogma. Piety and dogma are one and the same thing and cannot be separated. Where

teaching is correct, praxis is also correct. Orthodoxy means right belief and right praxis."

The participation of the faithful in the Body of the Church and their partaking of the uncreated grace of God through the Mysteries and prayer saves them from death, the devil and sin.

Christ saves people through His Church and in any other way known to Him, but we know the way to be saved: through the Mysteries of the Church and Orthodox devotion, which means purification, illumination and glorification, or, differently stated, praxis and theoria.

"There is no salvation outside the Church. Christ offers saving grace to everyone. When someone is saved outside the visible Church, this means that Christ Himself saves him. If he is a non-Orthodox member, he is saved because Christ saves him; the 'offshoot' to which he belongs does not save him. His salvation is not accomplished by the 'Church-offshoot' to which he belongs, because the Church that saves is one, that is, Christ."

4. The Purpose of the Church

The purpose of the Church is not social, moral, philosophical or anything else, but pre-eminently soteriological and theological. This is especially obvious from the connection between Easter, Pentecost and the Feast of All Saints.

> "What is the purpose of Orthodoxy? It is clear from the calendar of feasts. We have Easter and we have Pentecost. Baptism in water takes place at Easter. Baptism in the Holy Spirit takes place at Pentecost. So until Pentecost the Holy Spirit visits the faithful. And what is the outcome? The Sunday of All Saints. In other words, that all Orthodox Christians may be numbered among the saints. The fruit of the Holy Spirit of Pentecost is the sanctification of man. This is the aim of Baptism.
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> Now only monks have this aim: it has become the calling of monks. Aren't all human beings meant to become holy? Is it only for monks? What does this imply? Doesn't everyone need to be cured? It is as though we had cancer and said that treatment was only needed for doctors, not for anyone else. What kind of medical science would accept the idea of treating only one group of people? Treatment is for everyone who is sick."

The Gospel according to John, which is described as the 'spiritual Gospel', is read in Eastertide. It includes Christ's high-priestly prayer, which refers to the vision of God's glory, and to the Apostles' acquiring unity between themselves within the glory of God. This became a reality on the day of Pentecost, and is also demonstrated by the Feast of All Saints, which is a fruit of Pentecost.

The aim that the Church had in view, the glorification and sanctification of man, is the original aim of the creation of the first-formed human beings. We see this from the fact that even small children can attain to holiness. From their birth they have an illumined nous, the

noetic faculty functions, but it is obscured by darkness and the conditions of their surroundings.

Some people see the Church as a religion that satisfies their emotions and their mundane concerns. The Church, however, is not a religion.

> "We have religious people who go to church, light a candle and pray that their daughters may marry rich husbands, or that their sons may find wives with good dowries. Is this the Church? That we should pray religiously for our vineyards? Yes, these are indeed religious matters, because God is interested in every phase of man's life, isn't He? So when we have problems we will certainly ask God to help us."

Others see the purpose of the Church as being simply the salvation of the soul after death.

> "Do you know what the major problem is nowadays? Orthodoxy has been identified with concern for the soul's salvation after death. This is the problem. Because it has been identified with life after death and there are no longer any criteria for who is a member of the Church, for assessing whether someone has been cured or not, or whether someone is illuminated or not; the patristic criteria are no longer applied to people's lives today."

The Church forms a 'commonwealth' in which there are different laws from those that apply in worldly states.

> "What is Orthodoxy? Certainly Orthodoxy is in communication with God. Orthodoxy worships God and participates in God's glory. The Church is made up of human beings who are the Body of Christ, but are differentiated according to their various states. In Orthodoxy there is no democracy or absolute equality between the citizens of the Body of Christ. There is inequality. In fact, there is often great inequality.
>
> This means that the commonwealth of the Church has no link with democracies or dictatorships or anything else. It is a charismatic community of human beings who make up the Body of Christ. Among them can be distinguished Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, bishops, priests, deacons and laypeople. Then the glorified, the illuminated, those being purified, and so on. We have very great variety."

Also, there are no boundaries between the Church and the world. This means that the worldly mentality can enter the members of the Church. Some members may not respond to the activation of the grace of Baptism. In this context we should look at who are the members of Church, who are the members of the Body of Christ. All who are baptised and chrismated, who partake of the Body and Blood of Christ and have noetic prayer are members of the Church.

"According to the Fathers of the Church, all who are in this state are members of the Church. According to St John Chrysostom, for example, that uninformed one who says 'Amen' is the layman of the Church. That is to say, all the others are not the laity. So what are they? They are the clergy. Because there are clergy and laity in the Church, aren't there?

So the one who says 'Amen', in Chapter 14 of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, Apostle Paul's uninformed man, according to the Fathers of the Church is the layman, who is not with the others whom *'God has appointed in the church: first apostles...'* up until *'varieties of tongues'* (1 Cor. 12:28). He is outside, he is uninformed."

Those who have received the Holy Spirit are members of the Church. This is clear from the passage from St Paul: *"And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues"* (1 Cor. 12:28).

"God puts in the Church, first Apostles, second Prophets, third teachers, and so on, and the list ends with *'varieties of tongues'*. God appointed in the Church. Because in the early Church someone to whom the Holy Spirit had come and in whom He dwelt was regarded as a member of the Church. And the sign that the Holy Spirit dwelt in someone was speaking in tongues. This was the chrism: that the Holy Spirit spoke within the man and prayed in him."

Anyone who does not have the Holy Spirit is not connected with Christ, does not know Christ and goes as far as to deny Christ.

"This is why in the early Church when someone denied Christ it was a sign that he was not in a state of illumination, so he was

not a member of the Church. The Apostle Paul says, *'God has appointed these in the church: first apostles...'* and ends with *'varieties of tongues'*. Anyone who is not a temple of the Holy Spirit is not a member of the Church, and the proof that he is not a member of the Church is that he denies Christ.

In the early Church, therefore, those who denied Christ were not allowed to take Holy Communion, except on their deathbed. Why was that? Not because the Church is harsh, but because someone who denied Christ was not in a state of illumination. It was not a punishment. It was a recognition of the fact that he was not illuminated, so he could not take Holy Communion."

The Fathers' basic teaching about the Church is that it is described as a therapeutic centre, a hospital. It cures human beings of the deep wound caused by their Fall.

"Let us imagine that the Church ever since its foundation has been a clinic, a hospital, which people enter to be treated, and this treatment was purification of the nous, then illumination of the nous, then the glorification of man, so that he may reach a natural condition. Man's natural condition is to love without self-interest, to have the love that *'does not seek its own'* (1 Cor. 13:5)."

"In order to evaluate and identify the subject of theology in Greece and the state of the Church, one could characterise the early Church as a large hospital which treats those who are ill. The director of this hospital is called a bishop, and the doctors are called priests and deacons. The deacons and deaconesses are, we could say, nursing staff. The priests are the doctors. The bishop is the president of the presbyterate, of the hospital, of the parish.

The hospital is the parish. In it are those being treated and spiritual physicians. That is the hospital. There is a tradition that we have an excellent hospital. We have all the means to treat people, great success in treatment, and very few leave the hospital without being cured. And there is a medical school within the hospital. Just as in the large hospitals in America, there is usually a medical school inside the hospital. There is a medical school that produces the doctors.

For some reason this medical science gradually collapsed, and whereas the percentage of those cured in the first years of the hospital was 80-85% cured of all illnesses, with the passage of time this percentage begins to fall. From 85% it falls to, say, 75%, 55%, 50%, and afterwards we reach 30% and so on. This means that medical science is not in a good state. Medical science is not carrying on as it should; there is no tradition to keep it correct, because some useless doctors have come in without adequate knowledge. They restricted themselves to the little they knew, they did not increase their accuracy, and they became rather slapdash.

So 30% of them say that things are not going well now. They said: 'Why don't we go and create another hospital, an annex?' And they do just that. This is monasticism. Do you understand? When the parishes collapsed, those who had praxis, purification, illumination and glorification, that is to say, noetic prayer, the prayer-rope, the whole ascetic teaching, left the parishes and monasticism flourished.

Of course, there is no way in which the Protestants can accept that monasticism is biblical, that monasticism originated from Holy Scripture. For them monasticism is a cancer that appears in the Church. Monasticism is a cancer, not something genuine that belongs to Christianity. Thus all Protestants are against monasticism.

Now various movements have begun, and the Americans have gone as far as monasteries. They are returning to the idea that they really ought to have monks and nuns. But in England there are some monks, and some of our own people were at a reception, and as soon as they arrived, they began watching the monks dancing 'rock and roll'. So one is entitled to suspect that perhaps on that subject something is going wrong, for them to be dancing 'rock and roll'.

Well, this building that is called a hospital has a little annex called a monastery. Nearly everyone that enters the Monastery is cured, whereas in the big building 80% are still not cured. Before 80% were cured, now 80% are no longer cured."

"We have a hospital, all the annexes and all the equipment, everything that is needed for the smooth running of the hospital and for people to be treated. But we have a director of the hospital

who does not know what these things are for. We have doctors in the hospital who do not know what's what, and we have reached the point of returning to the era of St Symeon the New Theologian.

The monks created a hospital alongside the original one, but afterwards they won back the Hierarchy and we entered the period of Turkish domination with the Hierarchy regained by reason of hesychasm, which reintroduced into the Church the bishop and clergy as spiritual physicians, who know how to diagnose and to cure. This sort of bishop returned to the Church with the revival of monasticism due to St Symeon the New Theologian."

"The important thing, however, is that, if one examines the early Church and the clergy, the relations between bishops, priests, deacons and laity, one immediately finds something strange: that early Orthodox theology very closely resembles contemporary psychiatry. What is the aim of theology and psychiatry? It is to cure people. And people are cured by a specific method."

"The Church, if left to itself, does its work. And what is its work? To cure people of the state they are in, to bring them through purification to illumination. This is the task of the Church: to bring light to the world."

The teaching that the Church is a spiritual hospital is linked with the other teaching, that the clergy are spiritual physicians who carry out diagnosis and treatment. At times the clergy took on other duties as well, particularly during the period of Turkish domination, when the bishops also took on the duties of leaders of the Greek community. They were clearly aware, however, of the task of the clergy.

"There is a link between the Church and the community, just as there is between doctors and the community. Let us suppose that the clergy is an association of doctors who are concerned with diagnosis and treatment. When that doctor, whom we shall call 'the bishop', also takes on duties of a political nature, we will not say that he stops being a doctor. He is now a political leader as well.

He carries out political duties, and it is not permissible for medical science to be confused with politics. When this individual works as a doctor, he works as a doctor. He treats the sick. When, however, he carries out the duties of a politician, we all know that he is

acting as a politician, and we do not confuse the duties of a doctor with those of a politician."

"The Church has diagnosis and treatment. You have to do this, that and the other in order to be cured. Why is treatment needed? Because you will see the glory of God, and if you have not undergone a change in your personality, so that selfish love is changed into unselfish love, if your heart is hardened, instead of seeing God as glory you will seen Him as a consuming fire, outer darkness and so on. Do you understand?

We shall all see God, but one will see Him in one way and the other in another way. If you are not cured, you will see Him in this way, and the Day of Judgment dawns, and one thing and another... Repentance, what is repentance? Repentance means changing the nous. The nous must change, must be cleansed and so on."

Unfortunately, in many phases of the historical life of the Church, its therapeutic character was lost, and this is secularisation.

"Instead of being a therapeutic centre, the Church has ended up being a place of magical ceremonies. And Orthodoxy, devoid of this therapeutic aspect and method, which is purification, illumination and glorification, is in danger of ending up as nothing but superstition.

The only thing that saves us is all our ceremonial, which was inherited from people who were in a state of illumination or glorification. So our liturgical books are completely all right, the decisions of the Ecumenical Councils are completely all right, the mould is all right, but its filling, the inner life of the Church, is something that needs to be studied."

"This is the work of the Church. But the way the Church has developed, instead of being a group of spiritual Fathers, like a hospital that has, say, fifty doctors, two thousand years have passed and the hospital is without doctors, but those who are unable to cure anything are called doctors. We are in danger of reaching this point, and the only thing that will save us is returning to the Fathers of the Church."

The success of the Church is usually seen in terms of its relation-

ship with the world and its surroundings. That too is one aspect of the Church's struggle.

> "On this journey the Church encounters historical events, which are not of an internal ecclesiastical form or character, but are the Church's struggle with the structure of society. We have a social structure. We not only have the ecclesiastical structure but the social structure as well."

The success of the Church, however, lies in the extent to which it sanctifies man.

> "The basic criterion for whether or not the Church is in a good state is success. If we have thousands of glorified people in a century, the Church is doing well. If we have a shortage, then something is going wrong. This is how one ought to judge the history of the Church. In eras when there are large numbers of people who have been cured, that is to say, illumined, the Church is in a good state.
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> Whether we are under persecution or whether Constantinople has fallen is not the criterion. The criterion in how many reach illumination and glorification, regardless of the state of the nation. In neo-Hellenism we have learnt to judge the success of the Church by the success of the state. The success of the state is identified with the success of the Church. From the patristic point of view, the state may be absolutely successful, and the Church may fail absolutely. We cannot judge medical science on the basis of how the national economy is doing. Modern Greeks, however, have identified the fortunes of the Church with the fortune of the state. They attempt to explain the destruction of the Byzantine Empire by holding the Church responsible."
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> "One has to bear these things in mind, because nowadays the history of the Church is usually reduced to a history of exciting events, such as Ecumenical Councils, scandals involving a Pope of Rome, wars and persecutions. The real history of the Church is the energy of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the faithful, and the fact that the faithful pass from one stage of perfection to another. This is the history of the Church.

The great festival of the Church is the calendar of saints, the calendar of feasts, when we celebrate the memory of the saints, because every saint of the Church represents the triumph of faith over the powers of the devil.

Apart from the fact that through the Mysteries (Sacraments) we all share together in the Body of Christ and are all on our way to the Day of Judgment, we undertake this struggle to be right with God on the Day of Judgment.

On the Church's journey, its great triumphs are when human beings become saints. For that reason, after the Body and Blood of Christ, we have the icons of Christ, the All-Holy Virgin and so on, but also the holy relics. These are the signs that provide proof that the Church is on the right path, because it has these people as leaders and spiritual guides.

The purpose of the Church is to make holy relics. It has no other aim. Holy relics include the whole dogmatic structure of the Church."

The success of the Church is not, therefore, identified with the success of the state. There are other specifications that determine the success of the Church. When we speak about the Church's success we mean that there are neptic and hesychastic Fathers who cure Christians.

"This is spirituality. We call it 'spirituality', which is a modern term. Spirituality and such things do not exist in the Fathers of the Church.

Now another strange terminology is being created. We say 'neptic Fathers of the Church'. Why do we talk about neptic Fathers of the Church? All Christians in the early Church were neptic, because if you were not spiritually vigilant, how could you become a temple of the Holy Spirit? How would you attain to *'varieties of tongues'*? These *'varieties of tongues'* were the first stage of being a member of the Church."

There are clear tokens of the success of the Church and these, as we mentioned earlier, are the sacred relics that show the realisation of the Church's purpose.

"The experience of glorification includes the whole human being,

the body as well as the soul. After someone has departed to the Lord, we know from the relics that he was glorified, and he is automatically numbered among saints of the Church.

We do not have a tradition, like the Papal Christians, of making saints, but God reveals the saints to us, usually by means of their relics and miracles."

The existence of sacred relics is proof that the Church is on the right path and fulfilling its purpose, which is the sanctification of human beings. The sacred relics are a reality that demonstrates victory over death. Because the human body is a collection of cells that disintegrates at death. When, however, someone's body remains incorrupt, it means that there is a superior force that does not allow it to disintegrate. This force is the energy of the uncreated grace of God. This fact ought to be studied from a theological point of view, but also from a biological point of view.

"What are the sacred relics? Are they not a chemical reality? They are a reality. Why is there no explanation? Why can we not find a biological or medical explanation for this issue? There is no explanation. Isn't this holy relic made up of cells? It is made up of cells and there is no decomposition.

Why is there no decomposition, as the body is made up of cells, the whole body is a system of cells? Well, since the cells undergo disintegration, for that reason the body disappears and becomes dust. So what has happened to the relic? It has undergone a suspension of disintegration of its cells, so it is in this condition.

Is this not an issue for a biologist or a chemist? Unfortunately in Greece, as the doctors suffer from complexes, the only ones who have taken an interest in these matters are those who are opposed. They made a start and then they abandoned the subject."

There are whole bodies of saints which are incorrupt, like that of St Spyridon. The subject of incorrupt relics is a theological fact.

"The holy relic of St Spyridon, which is preserved intact, is a suspension of the disintegration of the cell system. The fact that there is skin and everything else means that the cell system has not disintegrated. That is what it means.

> Why has it not disintegrated? Why does the sacred relic have this fragrance? I am amazed that biologists in Greece have not taken an interest in the matter. Those who have shown interest have done so only to ridicule the relics, not to make an objective study."

Thus the purpose of the Church, which is the salvation of its members, continues after death. For that reason the Church always prays for its members, because even after death there is a development in salvation, that is to say, there is continuous ascent in participation in God's grace, provided the Christian, through repentance, is in the perspective of purification and illumination of the nous.

5. The Spiritual Perfecting of Christians

Man was created by God in the image and likeness of God. Being in God's image is a given fact, and has not disappeared or been destroyed by his Fall, although the image has been darkened. Being in God's likeness, however, which is identified with glorification, is something which man has to reach by the action of divine grace and his own co-operation. The journey from the image to the likeness, which is man's purpose at the profoundest level, is called spiritual perfecting. This perfecting comes about within the Church, the real Body of Christ. Some basic aspects of this serious issue will be highlighted in the pages that follow.

a) Servant, Hired Worker, Son

A characteristic teaching found in Holy Scripture, which shows how man's spiritual perfection is achieved, is about passing through the states of servant, hired worker, and son or friend.

When man was created by God he was in a state of illumination. He had a close relationship with God. His nous was illumined by the Light of God, and in this way his whole body was illumined. Even the creation received reflections of this grace. After man's Fall, however, his nous was darkened, he lost his communication with God and became subject to the passions and created things. He became a servant of his rational faculty, his passions and the world around him. As a servant he worshipped the creation instead of the Creator, and he made false gods.

The incarnation of Christ aimed to free man from servitude and to restore him to adoption as a son by grace. On his journey towards glorification, man behaves initially like a servant, subsequently as a hired worker, and finally as a friend or son of God.

We encounter this throughout patristic teaching. As a servant, man struggles to keep God's commandments in order to escape Hell. As a

hired worker he does God's will to gain Paradise. And as a friend or son of God he obeys His commandments out of love for Him, without expecting any reward.

Shortly before His Passion, Christ told his Disciples: *"You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you"* (John 15:14-15).

When we were created by God we were created beings, creatures. By our spiritual birth and re-creation we became sons of God and acquired adoption as sons. St John the Evangelist proclaims: *"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God"* (John 1:12-13). Adoption by grace is the fruit and outcome of being born again in Christ. The Apostle Paul refers to this adoption, which is linked with man's glorification. *"But we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body"* (Rom. 8:23).

In another of his Epistles he links adoption with inner noetic prayer of the heart: *"Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all, but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, 'Abba, Father!'"* (Gal. 4:1-6).

Infants are servants to the elements of the world, whereas the sons of God are liberated from every kind of servitude and sense the fatherly love of God. They are sons of God, so they cry out to the Father and call upon Him in their hearts. This comes about because they have received the Spirit of the Son of God in their hearts, and in the name of this Spirit, they pray in their hearts. They are not servants but sons, and as sons they are heirs of the glory and rule (*vasileia*) of God.

This teaching is as clear as can be. Someone who lives, by the grace of God, within the Church, must pass through these three states: starting as a servant, he must become a hired worker, and subsequently a son of God.

> "Glorification is the destiny of all the faithful. This glorification is everyone's ultimate purpose. For that reason the Christian ought to progress from glory to glory. The servant must become a hired worker, and then a son of God and a faithful member of Christ. This happens in the Church."

The saints, referred to as the glorified, are the true friends of Christ. They have been united with Christ in reality, and participate in His glory.

> "Glorification, or divine vision, or the vision of the glory of Christ's divinity presupposes a radical change in man's spiritual state. Instead of being a servant, a hired worker or an enemy he must be transformed into a friend of God. This friendship is achieved by the grace of God and man's co-operation, by his reconciliation with God through the mystery of the Cross and the Resurrection."

There were friends of God in the Old Testament as well, but they were under the domination of death.

> "Unbroken remembrance of God, theoria and unselfish love, which transformed the Prophets into friends of God, was already functioning strongly before the incarnation of the Word. Before the incarnation, theoria and glorification were a temporary type and form of glorification, which was, however, a reality even when God's friends were subject to the sentence of death. When their bodies died they remained with their souls in Hades (the state of death), together with all the souls of all the dead. Those who were to be resurrected and glorified by Christ, and those who would eventually be condemned, stayed together in Hades until the incarnation and Resurrection of Christ."

Man's transition from being in servitude to being adopted as a son by grace, and the abolition of death, are the essence of Christ's incarnation and the presence of the Church in the world. This actually comes

about through the transformation of self-love into love for God, selfish love into unselfish love.

> "The servant does God's will for fear of damnation and the hired worker works for a wage, whereas the friend does everything out of unselfish love. Through glorification or divine vision God's friend comes close to the state of sinlessness. Finally he reaches that state and ascends endlessly towards the higher stages of perfection. He bears much fruit and the fruit lasts."

Servitude is mainly expressed through fear of death, whereas love is the state of the son of God by grace. The Apostle Paul defines the incarnation of Christ in terms of man's liberation from the fear of death. *"Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage"* (Heb. 2:14-15).

> "Without participating in the mystery of the Cross and Resurrection of Christ, by which - through purification, illumination and glorification - one overcomes the selfishness or self-love rooted in the fear of death, one cannot arrive at participation in the glorifying love of God through which one becomes a friend."

It is only then that one gets rid of the fear of death: *"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love"* (1 John 4:18). The glorified are the friends of God in the highest sense, because they have transcended every kind of servile dependence and are on their way to 'unending perfection'.

> "He who, through the mystery of the Cross and the Resurrection, achieves purification of the passions and deliverance from demonic energies, transcending the illumination of Baptism through glorification and becoming a friend of God, is a theologian and spiritual father in the highest sense. He is led by the Paraclete, the Spirit of truth, *'into all truth'*, as happened to the Apostles on the day of Pentecost."

We referred earlier to the passage from St Paul's Epistle to the Galatians (Gal. 4:1-6) where adoption as sons by grace is linked with noetic prayer.

> "The Apostle Paul says: *'When the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.'* What is this adoption as sons? *'Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!"'*
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> When someone has received the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit prays within him. This is what receiving the Holy Spirit means. Not simply that we go to the priest and he says something or other to us, and we receive the Holy Spirit as if by magic. We really do receive the Holy Spirit, because the Spirit now prays within us, not we ourselves. That is to say, we pray together with the Spirit, but it is the Spirit Who prays, crying *'Abba, Father!'*
>
> *'Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son.'* Then you stop being a servant and have become a son. Adoption as a son means noetic prayer. *'And if a son, then an heir of God through Christ'* (Gal. 4:4-7)."

The states of servant, hired worker and son or friend of God are very closely connected with the other spiritual ascents referred to throughout the biblical and patristic tradition as purification, illumination and glorification.

> "At the stages of servant and hired worker, man shares in God's perfection through participation in the purifying, illuminating and glorifying grace of the mystery of the Cross. This purifies the passions, illumines and sanctifies the whole man and, with his co-operation, makes it possible for him to be obedient to God's will unto death. By means of this obedience the grace of God transforms personal selfishness into unselfish love. Thus man is glorified and becomes God's friend and collaborator, Christ's brother and joint-king by grace, and an adoptive son of the Virgin."

We shall now consider purification, illumination and glorification. The fact is that the friends or sons of God pass on His will. They are the guides of the people of God and we owe them obedience.

b) Purification, Illumination, Glorification

The whole biblical and patristic tradition speaks of man's spiritual perfecting, of his progress from being in God's image to being in His likeness. Before his Fall, man's nous was in a state of illumination, and when he fell his nous was darkened, as we saw in an earlier section. The nous now needs to be purified and to return to the state of Adam in Paradise. From there it must reach glorification and theoria of the glory of God.

In this context we speak of purification, illumination and glorification. This journey is described as repentance, *metanoia* – changing the nous.

Repentance is possible through the grace of God, because the attack came from the devil, from outside. Man did not generate evil, but his free will accepted the devil's provocation.

> "Man was attacked by the devil, outside his human nature, in such a way that of his own free will, and not because he was unable to resist, he accepted the change of his nous from an active to a passive state. In an active state it is occupied only with theoria or unceasing remembrance of God, and this state illumined and sanctified the rational faculty and body in such a way that man was nourished and sustained by God Himself. The passive state is when man accepts the replacement of theoria and unceasing remembrance of God by the intrusion of concern for his body and the material creation, thus separating himself from the source of life. This state is death.
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> By means of repentance and the help that always depends on God, man becomes capable of reversing the initial defeat, and even subsequent defeats, by the devil, and of finally becoming victorious over Satan, by achieving uninterrupted remembrance of God, glorification and the transformation of his selfishness into divine love that does not seek its own."

The devil cannot repent, but human beings can.

> "Although there can be no repentance and salvation in the form of glorification for the devil and the fallen angels, as they are bodiless and were created in the eternal dimension, there is repentance

for man because of his bodily nature. Man owes it to the weakness of his body that he can repent."

i. Ecclesiastical Interpretation of the Stages of Spiritual Perfection

Christ said: *"Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect"* (Matt. 5:48). This means that the Christian, by the grace of God, should continually ascend the steps of spiritual perfection.

By the stages of perfection we certainly do not mean certain fixed points, certain stages in time and place. It is a matter of how the grace of God works in people. God's uncreated grace is active in the whole of creation and in man. When the grace of God cleanses someone, it is called 'purifying' grace, when it illumines it is called 'illuminating', and when it glorifies him it is called 'glorifying'.

We see this in Holy Scripture when it speaks of man's purification: *"Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God"* (2 Cor. 7:1). There is a characteristic passage which shows the stages of spiritual perfection in St Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians: *"But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God"* (1 Cor. 6:11). The phrase *"you were washed"* refers to purification, *"you were sanctified"* refers to illumination, and *"you were justified"* refers to glorification.

Christ is the Light and all who are united with Him receive Light and are radiant. Christ said to His Disciples: *"You are the light of the world."* (Matt. 5:14) and *"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven"* (Matt. 5:16).

The holy Fathers move in this context. St Dionysios the Areopagite speaks about purification, illumination and perfection. St Maximos the Confessor talks continuously about practical philosophy, natural theoria and mystical theology. St Symeon the New Theologian writes *Practical and Theological Chapters*. St Gregory Palamas refers to natural, theological, moral and practical chapters, and so on.

At the beginning of man's journey to glorification he shares in God's

purifying energy, subsequently in His illuminating energy and finally in His glorifying energy. Of course, there are ups and downs on this path. Purification consists in rejecting thoughts (*logismoi*) from the heart, so that one single thought remains: the name of Christ. At the same time, the passible part of the soul – desire and anger – is cleansed. Subsequently, illumination is when the nous is separated from the rational faculty and enlightened by the grace of God. It then has noetic prayer, and the illumined nous directs the passible part of the soul.

While there is an upward journey from purification to illumination and glorification, at the same time there can be a downward path. The experience of divine vision remains for a longer or shorter time, and subsequently one descends to illumination. It can also happen that someone loses illumination and denies Christ in practice. In that case he is numbered afterwards among the penitents.

In broad outline this is the teaching of the Fathers on the stages or degrees of spiritual perfecting. We shall go on to analyse this spiritual journey further.

Although no one can deny that the theology of spiritual perfecting is widespread throughout the biblical and patristic tradition, some maintain that the Apostles and the Fathers were influenced in this respect by ancient Greek philosophy, particularly Neoplatonism, which referred to these issues.

It is a fact that the word and concept of 'purification' is encountered in classical tragedy, which aimed to cleanse the souls of those watching from passions, by means of mercy and fear, and subsequently to lead the audience, as Aristotle says, to a higher state than that they were in before watching the tragedy. The term 'purification' was also used by Plotinus and Neoplatonism in general, but they defined it as the soul's flight from the visible world and from the body, in order to arrive at the uncreated world of ideas. Thus courage purifies man from the fear of death and magnanimity from corruptible things. In addition, the term 'enlightenment' is found in Plato, according to whom, when man is constantly occupied with the essence of the good, suddenly a light is lit in his soul, and he acquires knowledge of the good. According to Plato and the Neoplatonists, therefore, enlightenment and illumination is the knowledge through enlightenment of the archetypes of beings, which are the uncreated ideas.

"Some hold the view that the teaching about perfection according to the holy Fathers of the Church is of idolatrous origin, and that the Fathers of the Church were allegedly influenced by these distinctions between purification, illumination and glorification, because there are parallels in Neoplatonism as well, and this division between the stages of perfection clearly exists. On account of a similarity between these two, our own people have adopted this view, which comes mainly from studies done by Protestants.

Having rejected monasticism and adopted Calvin's absolute predetermination, or Luther's teaching about man's salvation by faith alone, the Protestants were faced with a form of monasticism in the tradition that they have encountered (Franco-Latin), which was based on merits. As they discovered that the teaching about merits was erroneous, they also condemned celibacy and monasticism. What is more, Luther, mainly, but also Calvin, stirred up a reaction against the stages of perfection. Later, Protestant historians studied the issue and were so delighted to find the amazing similarity between patristic teaching and the teaching of the idolaters that they asserted that the teaching about the stages of perfection is of idolatrous origin.

Because our own people are so eager to go and study at foreign universities – I am not saying that they shouldn't go and study, but let them at least exercise their judgment when they go to study, because they go uncritically – you now see the writings of Orthodox theologians full of this idea, you see it everywhere, that the Church has been influenced by the idolaters, particularly regarding the stages of perfection."

We shall see, however, that the Prophets, Apostles and Fathers used these words – purification, illumination and glorification – but they gave them a completely different meaning from the meaning the classical philosophers gave them. This has also happened with many other terms, including 'essence', 'energy', 'person', 'dispassion', 'the tripartite division of the soul' and 'the supreme Being'. Instead of searching and enquiring into the fact that these terms were used by classical philosophy, we should look at the specific meaning that the holy Fathers gave them.

Patristic teaching on the stages or degrees of spiritual perfecting is clearly different from the corresponding teachings of the classical philosophers.

> "The Fathers of the Church do not accept the reality of human perfection in theoria in the Platonic, Neoplatonic or Augustinian sense of blissful union. Man's destiny is not the satisfaction of egotistic desires through possessing what makes him happy, but rather the transformation of self-seeking self-love into love that does not seek its own. Thus progress towards perfection is without end both in this life and in the life to come.
>
> This means that theoria by itself is not a guarantee against sin and falling in its first or later stages. It is very probable – without this constituting any sort of reproach of imperfection against God or His creatures – that Satan, the angels and man fell from a state of theoria or a lower level of theoria."

The Church aims to cure man, as self-love must become love for God and other people, and selfish love must become unselfish. This comes about through the action of God and man's co-operation: 'synergy' in the theological sense of the term.

If in every science a method is required in order to achieve its aim, the same is true of ecclesiastical life. For there to be success man needs to respond to God's love, and this goal is fulfilled through the stages of spiritual perfection.

> "In every science we have continuity. Astronomers inherit a tradition from astronomers and they develop it. Theologians, chemists and doctors do the same. Every science has a tradition. Its aim is to transmit the tradition to future generations. The aim of every science is to pass on knowledge about that science. The transmission of knowledge is intended to achieve certain results. The basic criterion for every science is success in achieving the aim of the science. For surgery, it is success in surgical operations, for biology it is success in the research and discovery of biological phenomena. Every science has its aim.
>
> So what is the aim of Orthodoxy? In patristic theology the aim is man's repentance. But repentance in the Fathers means a change

of direction for man's nous, the therapeutic treatment of the nous, purification, illumination and glorification. Someone who does not go through this treatment is not regarded as a theologian.

Success is the criterion. If someone has the tradition that leads people from purification to illumination and from illumination to glorification, he carries on the tradition. He is within the framework of the tradition. By leading others to illumination and glorification, he is not only within the tradition himself, but brings others into this tradition. So the tradition continues.

What is the criterion? It is curing man. It is a therapeutic treatment. The criterion for this therapeutic treatment is success: that we reach the point of being cured. From this point of view theology is no different from any of the other positive sciences. All sciences have this aim: success in research and analysis, and subsequently success in the results of this research."

Man must be reconciled with God and become His friend. God is not reconciled with man, as God is not an enmity with anyone, but man is reconciled with God and returns to friendship with God.

"At the first stage, purification, man departs from sin. Man struggles against sin. When he reaches the stage of illumination, however, sin itself begins to depart from him. If he reaches glorification, which starts with illumination of the nous, the nous is no longer affected by the rational faculty, the passions or the surroundings, and man is no longer susceptible to influences from the rational faculty, the passions and the environment, but only from God, because God's uncreated energy acts within him. Then his nous becomes the dwelling-place of Christ and, through Christ, of the Holy Trinity."

The holy Fathers interpreted the Old Testament from the perspective of the stages of spiritual perfection. They go further than a few historical events, and look at how the Prophets and the righteous experience purification, illumination and glorification.

As has been explained in other chapters, there are certainly differences between the Old and New Testaments. In the Old Testament the unincarnate Word appears, whereas in the New Testament the incarnate Word is seen, and through Christ man transcends death. But there

is no difference with regard to the means of becoming perfect and the degree of perfection.

"These stages – purification, illumination and glorification – obviously exist in the Old Testament as well. If you ever get involved with patristic theology, not just from hearsay, but by getting to grips with the actual writings of the Fathers, you will see these things again and again in the Fathers of the Church. It is not by chance that when St Gregory of Nyssa, for example, wanted to write about man's perfection, he wrote his book, *The Life of Moses.* As an example of the perfection to which man can attain, St Gregory of Nyssa puts forward the life of Moses, although Moses is in the Old Testament.

In Greece today there is a prejudice that comes from the Protestants, especially the Lutherans, that there is a separation. The Old Testament is the book of the Law and the New Testament is the book of divine grace. In the Old Testament the Hebrews have the Law, and we in the New Testament have divine grace. In the Old Testament there is sin, the ancestral sin, all the sins, whereas everything good is in the New Testament. In patristic theology, however, there is no division between the Old and New Testaments. The division is between the stages of perfection.

The Law applies in the Old Testament, but also in the New Testament. The Law is not only in the Old Testament. The Law is in the New Testament as well. Why? Because it is *'our tutor to bring us to Christ'*. The Apostle Paul says it clearly: *'The law was our tutor to bring us to Christ'* (Gal. 3:24). But when St Paul says *'our tutor to bring us to Christ'* he does not mean, as the Lutherans and others suppose, that the Old Testament Law is a tutor to lead us to the New Testament. No. The Law leads us to the state of purification.

When someone is in the state of purification, the Law, that is to say, the created Law, becomes his tutor until he reaches the state of illumination. Once he reaches illumination or theoria, the tutor – the Law – has led him to Christ, and Christ takes the place of the Law in his life. The Law is also inscribed in his heart. It is no longer *'on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart'* (2 Cor. 3:3). The Law is written in his heart.

This does not happen only in the New Testament but in the Old

Testament as well. When the New Testament speaks of the Prophets becoming perfect, it does not deprive them of perfection. The Prophets attained perfection. That is why St Gregory Nyssa automatically thought of Moses, in order to explain how Moses reached the highest perfection. In fact, St Gregory of Nyssa proves that Moses reached the love that *'does not seek its own'* (1 Cor. 13:5).

There is no higher perfection than to love within taking account of self, as one has also reached glorification. This is essential in order to arrive at this state. The method and means of attaining perfection are not only to be found in the New Testament, but also in the Old Testament. Consequently the grace of perfection is in both Testaments.

We continually face the problem that there are many would-be pious people, who either pretend to be pious, or speak about piety or morals and categorise people as good and bad. In the Orthodox tradition, humankind is not divided into good and bad, moral and immoral people. There is no such thing in the Orthodox Church. In the Orthodox Church there are stages of perfection, not moral and immoral, good and bad categories."

"Take any of the services and you will see that all the interest revolves round three factors: purification, illumination and glorification. These are the foundations. Apart from purification, illumination and glorification there is nothing else. That is to say, there is no theology.

There may be various interesting points, or someone may be interested in what Nebuchadnezzar or Samson or David did and take all these things as history. These are all historical records and may occupy a historian who can use them as historical sources. However, although it is possible for these figures to be studied independently of the science of Orthodox theology, they are using these texts for a purpose for which they were not intended.

It is not the purpose of the texts simply to provide historical or philological information or to narrate the history of the kings, and so on. Their aim is to relate the progress of a people that had devoted itself to doing the will of God. And they learned the will of God from men called Patriarchs or Prophets, who were their leaders.

Anyone who reads the Old Testament carefully to see who these Patriarchs and Prophets were will see something strange. In the lives of the saints and in the New Testament, a Patriarch or Prophet is someone who has reached glorification – the Fathers call divine vision *theosis*-glorification. He has passed through purification and arrived at illumination.

When the Fathers of the Church read the Old Testament, they read it as if already in the Old Testament there was purification and illumination, constant remembrance of God and noetic prayer, and they interpret the Psalms accordingly. The Psalms are interpreted as sacred songs expressing this experience of purification, illumination and glorification."

"If someone reads, for instance, the Pentateuch or Deuteronomy, carefully, all the provisions concerning the Law, he will see that the Law in the Old Testament had an ascetic character. It has no connection at all with the theories of Plato or Aristotle about the law. Its aim is purely ascetic. The purpose of these things is to bring about the purification of the faithful. In fact the subject of purification is much emphasised in the Old Testament.

The aim of the purification rituals and the whole ascetic practice with regard to purification is to prepare man to remember God day and night, even when asleep, that he may have remembrance of God, constant remembrance of God. This means illumination of the nous, which already existed in the Old Testament.

It is strange that, when the Fathers of the Church speak about perfection and want to describe man's journey towards purification, they take the example of Moses, which is why we have *The Life of Moses* by St Gregory of Nyssa. If you read St Gregory of Nyssa's *The Life of Moses* you will see that, as far as the author is concerned, Moses passed through all the stages of perfection and purification, and reached illumination and glorification. Why? Because according to the Fathers, glorification means seeing God.

To experience the Holy Trinity is also a revelation, but in addition it perfects the human being. Someone who reaches glorification reaches perfection as well. The two are interlinked and inseparable. There can be no glorification without perfection. Nor can anyone

reach perfection without attaining to glorification. These things can never be separated in the Orthodox Church.

Anyone who sits down and writes about Christian perfection without writing about illumination of the nous or knowing anything about divine vision, is writing about a perfection that is neither Orthodox nor scriptural. Holy Scripture regards divine vision, which is the highest degree of man's purification and illumination, as perfection. For the Fathers of the Church the Old Testament itself contains the stages of perfection: purification, illumination and glorification. The experience of glorification is the foundation of the Old Testament. That is why the Fathers emphasise that the Prophets reached these stages.

We repeat that, when the Fathers want to describe the stages of perfection, they use Moses as an example. Moses, of course, lived before the incarnation. This means that not only does man's perfection exist in the Old Testament, but there is also reconciliation, because the Old Testament Prophets are friends of God. To be a friend of God one must participate in reconciliation with God.

According to the Fathers of the Church, God is always man's friend. God always loves man and is always a friend. God has no enmity towards man. Man is at enmity with God. How does man become hostile to God? He becomes hostile to God because his nous is darkened. When his nous is darkened and inactive it does not function, but even when it does function, it functions demonically. He whose nous is darkened is an enemy of God, in the sense that he does not do God's will, because he is in darkness.

So God is not at enmity with man, but man is at enmity for God. Even in the Old Testament, however, man can recover from this hostility, practise asceticism and achieve purification of the nous and illumination of the nous. When he reaches illumination of the nous, the reconciliation of man with God is already beginning, so he is already beginning to become a friend of God. And if he reaches glorification he is then God's friend."

The shared characteristic of all the Prophets, Apostles and saints is noetic prayer in the heart, which is proof that someone is a temple of the Holy Spirit.

"The Fathers teach that noetic prayer is not only in the New Testament. There is noetic prayer in the Old Testament as well. It is a tradition of the Old Testament and the New Testament and part of the whole Christian tradition."

"For someone to be a temple of the Holy Spirit is an experience. If one reads the Apostle Paul carefully, he is not using empty words every time he describes the Holy Spirit Who cries out *'in your hearts... "Abba, Father!"'* (Gal. 4:6), Who prays in man's heart. This is the reality. This tradition exists in the Old Testament as well, not only in the New Testament."

The difference is that the Old Testament bears witness to the experience of the unincarnate Word, but the New Testament to the experience of the incarnate Word.

"Man's nous becomes a dwelling-place of Christ and, through Christ, of the Holy Trinity. This happens not only in the New Testament but also in the Old Testament, except that there Christ is unincarnate. When Christ dwells within someone, He is present, but without His flesh, of course, because He has not yet taken flesh."

The aim of Holy Scripture and the whole of life in the Church is to lead man to glorification. There is no other historical or religious aim.

"The sole aim of the language of Holy Scripture, of the Fathers and the Councils is to be used as a spiritual means by which someone can be led, under the guidance of a spiritual father, to the stages of perfection. They have no other aim."

This is clear from the order in which the books of the Gospels are read in Church worship.

"This distinction is clear in Holy Scripture, so the material contained in the Gospels is classified accordingly. We have the Gospel of Mark, the aim of which is clearly to oppose demonic energies. The whole of Mark's Gospel is predominantly about purification. The same is true of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. These Gospels were written in this way in the early Church because they were used prior to Baptism. They were catechetical handbooks for the catechumens, who were at the stage of purification. After they had

been baptised they used the 'spiritual Gospel', the Gospel for those who have the Spirit.

As one received the Holy Spirit at Baptism and Chrismation, afterwards special instruction was given based on the Gospel of John. That is why it is obvious that the Gospel of John spends hardly any time on the devil, whereas the so-called synoptic Gospels are very concerned with demons and driving them out. It is immediately clear from the way the material in the Gospels is organised that there is a marked distinction between the teaching given to those on their way to purification and the teaching for those who have received the Holy Spirit and are in the state of illumination.

In the Church's calendar we see that the three synoptic Gospels are read and interpreted all the year round, and when we come to Easter, the Easter Gospel at the second Resurrection service begins *'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God'* (John 1:1). And from the second Resurrection service at Easter up until Pentecost there is daily interpretation of the fourth Gospel. The Gospel of John is mainly apologetic and dogmatic, and aims to illumine those who have passed through the stage of purification as catechumens and have become newly-baptised Christians. It is not by chance that the Gospel of John is read and interpreted from Easter until Pentecost. That is why the Fathers of the Church call this Gospel the 'spiritual Gospel'. It is not for everyone, but only for those who have been baptised and so on. What certain people say nowadays about it being influenced by Greek philosophy is – forgive the expression – drivel."

The Mysteries (Sacraments) of the Church are at the centre of its life. They are the core of the tradition and expression of its inner life. The aim of all the Mysteries, however, is that the Christian should climb up the path of perfection – purification, illumination and glorification. We see the same thing in the whole liturgical tradition.

"The basis of Orthodoxy is the same as the methodology used in the positive sciences, and this fact needs to be properly evaluated and accurately identified. It should become a focus of interest for Orthodox Christians, as it deserves to be.

Why do we have our liturgical tradition? The liturgical tradition

is an expression of this tradition; it expresses nothing other than purification, illumination and glorification. Take all the services: Vespers, Matins, the Divine Liturgy, the services of Baptism and Chrismation, the service for blessing the Chrism performed by the bishops on Holy Thursday, monastic profession, marriage – all are about purification, illumination and glorification."

This method of being perfected is not something external, something imposed. It is man's natural path because it aims to restore the function of the nous, an organ that everyone possesses. This is not something psychological, emotional or even religious.

"There is an instrument that is used in Orthodox theology and constitutes an indispensable element of it. Without it Orthodox theology cannot exist. It is an instrument called the noetic faculty. Although it is an instrument, it is not included in science. It is the only instrument needed for divine vision.

We construct telescopes, microscopes, balances and all the instruments used in other sciences, but in Orthodox theology we do not construct any instruments. We have the instrument ready-made. It is part of the human personality and we do not make it. All we do is put it to work. We undertake purification; we provoke illumination and glorification. We only provoke them, we do not bring about either illumination or glorification. God brings about illumination and glorification. Illumination and glorification are gifts of God. Purification, however, is the work of man with God's help.

When all is said and done, for the nous to be purified (to expel thoughts) it is not even necessary to be a Christian. The Hindu monk does the same. It is an exercise that he does. One does not need to be a Christian to perform this exercise. However, the purification of the nous (driving away thoughts) is one thing and purification of the passions is something else. It is purification not only of the nous but of the passions that brings divine grace."

There are occasions when this entire patristic tradition of purification, illumination and glorification is altered, spoilt and secularised.

"When the patristic perception of purification, illumination and glorification disappeared – although our services are full of puri-

fication and illumination – look at any service – we pray continuously for purification, illumination and glorification. It is in all the troparia. The services of Baptism and Chrismation, our paraklises, Compline, the troparia and the Psalms are full of this teaching.

But when the patristic interpretation of these things was dismissed, purification was reduced to abstention from sins, usually either sexual sins or moralistic ones, such as lies, stealing and so on. It ended up being merely ethical teaching that did not cure man's personality. So instead of being concerned with treating the core of his personality, as a psychiatrist would be, man was concerned about external acts and had a very hypocritical disposition. He pretended that he had no temptations, whereas in fact he had. And he thought that he could surmount them, but afterwards he saw that he couldn't. So he thought that no one else had temptations, and felt guilty. Young people are shocked at the temptations they have.

In the patristic tradition, by contrast, these problems are solved by noetic prayer. Teaching someone how he should behave is not the same as teaching him how to find strength to behave in this way. As he cannot manage to do it, he pretends that he has managed. These are very funny things. There is a lot of hypocrisy, particularly among Christians, and the more pious they are, the more hypocritical they are these days. That's how things stand. There's nothing we can do about it."

St Maximos the Confessor, who continually speaks about purification, illumination and glorification in his works, makes another distinction and speaks of praxis and theoria. This is not a different division. Careful study of his teaching shows that by 'praxis' he means purification, which is why he speaks of practical philosophy or praxis; and by 'theoria' he means illumination or natural theoria and also glorification or theology. He teaches that theoria begins with illumination of the nous or noetic prayer and then, when someone shares in the illuminating grace of God, by God's good pleasure, at moments when he least expects it, he also arrives at the vision of God. When theoria comes to an end, the one who has beheld God returns to illumination of the nous, that is to say, noetic prayer. Thus praxis is the basis of theoria. All the writings of the Fathers, including those of St Basil the

Great and St Gregory the Theologian, speak about praxis (purification) and theoria (illumination-glorification).

Certainly, in the Middle Ages in the West, the terms 'praxis' and 'theoria' were differently interpreted. By 'praxis' they meant missionary work and by 'theoria' they meant speculation on theological matters.

In the patristic tradition, however, praxis is man's repentance through the purification of his heart, and theoria is the enlightenment or illumination of the nous and the vision of the uncreated Light through man's glorification.

> "In the Western type of monasticism a distinction is made between the active life of praxis and the contemplative life of theoria. The active life is when one dedicates oneself to missionary work and goes to Africa or China, for instance, or enters the administration of the Church, by becoming a bishop or a parish priest or joins a religious order. This is the active life. All the Popes of Rome come from those living the active life. Then there are some, very few, in the Frankish Church who are called contemplatives and spend their time in prayer and theoria – 'contemplation' as they say in the West. Contemplation is a sort of spiritual speculation which is completely foreign to the Orthodox tradition. In the Orthodox tradition we have both praxis and theoria."

The stage of purification or praxis is the stage of repentance, and theoria starts with illumination. From the illumination of the nous theology also begins to develop. Someone at the stage of illumination is said to 'theologise', to talk about God, but when he ascends to glorification-theoria he is a real theologian.

> "The one who theologises is in the state of illumination and talks about God on the basis of the recorded experience of the glorified, in other words, the Old and New Testament and the writings of the Fathers of the Church. When he reaches the state of illumination he uses the liturgical prayers, the hymns and supplications he hears in church. The Holy Spirit prays within someone in a state of illumination with prayers and supplications from the liturgical tradition. Once someone is in this state of illumination he theologises. There is a basic difference between those who have reached glorification,

who are true theologians, and those who theologise, who are in the state of illumination, even if they too have a small taste of the experience of glorification. The theologian speaks about God, but so do those who theologise.

The fact that those who theologise also speak about God does not mean that they are theologians. They will become theologians in the full sense when they reach the state of glorification and behold Christ in glory. Then all truth will be revealed to them, as far as human beings can know it in this life. Christ is the Truth in Person. Until such time as someone is glorified he simply theologises and is a student of theology. The glorified are graduates of this theology. Today, of course, all those who have taken a degree from the theological school of a university are theology graduates. They call themselves theologians, but they have no connection at all with the real theologians of the patristic tradition.

As regards who is really a theologian, if one uses the criteria of the Apostle Paul and the Fathers of the Church, such as St Symeon the New Theologian, one sees that modern Orthodox theology today, which is influenced by Russian theology, is not patristic theology but a distortion of patristic theology. It was written by people who did not possess the spiritual prerequisites mentioned above."

Finally, the real purpose of theology is to enable man to pass from purification to illumination and glorification.

"That is the aim of theology, say the Fathers. Theology has only one aim: purification, illumination and glorification. Theology has no other purpose. Do you understand? Theology has no aim other than purification, illumination and glorification."

Without these degrees of perfection Orthodoxy does not exist.

"What is Orthodoxy without purification, illumination and glorification? Can anyone tell me? I don't know if you can draw this conclusion, because the Church did not reach this conclusion. Why not? Because there were monasteries. Purification, illumination and glorification, as they used to take place in the traditional way, gradually became the task of monasticism. The bishop, so to speak, would sit and act as an administrator and would say 'I have five monas-

teries. If you want to lead that sort of life, go to a monastery. We are engaged in administration.'

Unfortunately this tradition changed, and it is mainly on this point that the secularisation of theology becomes obvious.

"Purification became release from moral failings, from an ethical standpoint. It seems that the Greek mentality had a greater problem with sex than with anything else. The problem of sex became an obsession for the modern Greeks. So purification for the pious means not having sexual temptations.

Illumination became Sunday School: learning Holy Scripture, Church history, the lives of a few saints; in other words, filling the rational faculty. Although purification is illumination of man's nous, they tried to illuminate his reason. Instead of the nous being illuminated, the rational faculty is illuminated nowadays."

It must be understood that no one can live life in the Church without purification, illumination and glorification.

"Without purification, illumination and glorification there is no salvation. This is salvation: purification and illumination."

The saints know from experience that the stages of spiritual perfection flow into one another.

"One ought also to pay attention to the fact that, for the Fathers, the stages are not separated from one other on the scale of perfection, and there is no distinction between imperfect and perfect. Instead there is a rising scale of perfection without end. Thus purification is also a state of perfection, together with enlightenment and theoria. Even within theoria there is no end to the ascent to higher levels of perfection. This is how it is, not only for man, but also for the angels. This point clearly indicates that the Fathers' teachings with regard to perfection have nothing to do with the ancient Greek philosophers or any other philosophy."

There is a continuous ascent in divine vision, by the uncreated grace of God. A reduction in divine grace has consequences for this progress.

"It ought also to be emphasised that the existence of stages of theoria does not mean that every stage lower than a higher one is

a sort of imperfection, or even a relative imperfection. Perfection is the same, as the uncreated glory is indivisibly divided; it is the same between and within created participants. Increasing perfection without end is an increase in receptiveness to more and more grace for ever.

As the love of those who are glorified ceased to be possessive at the lower end of theoria, increasing satisfaction of further unsatisfied desires is not a problem. Instead there is the reality of eternal creative expansion of unselfish love."

This means that there is no end to love, but it will be continually perfected for ever.

The following sections will analyse purification, illumination and glorification in broader terms.

ii. Definition of Purification

Our tradition not only speaks about purification but defines its meaning and distinguishes it from any other type purification, religious, social or otherwise. We shall look at this is the following analyses.

First of all, we ought to examine what exactly purification is. People usually talk about cleaning up society or the state. Certainly social conditions of life should be improved. Purification, however, according to the Orthodox tradition, is internal.

"Everyone here in Greece speaks about purification, in the sense that we ought to purge the state mechanism of opponents. When those on the political Right speak of purification, they mean that those on the Left should go; and when those on the Left speak of purging the political structure, they mean that those on the Right should go. So here in Greece purification means clearing out our opponents.

In this sense, however, our opponents are not the devil or thoughts (*logismoi*) that have no place in the noetic faculty. Purification in this context is achieved through legislation and police supervision of other people. This is purification as seen in totalitarian regimes. Real purification, however, does not come about through laws or surveillance of one individual or another. Purification is inner purification."

At the beginning purification has a moral orientation.

"Purification is essentially the asceticism that one practises by avoiding doing bad things and doing good things. It begins with ethics; there is a moral orientation in the beginning. We learn to fast, to do everything necessary to make progress in the initial stages."

As every sin and passion is the result of demonic energy and our own will, purification is achieved by getting rid of the devil's energies from the soul.

In the Gospels we see that Christ drove out demons to free people who were in the power of the devil. This is the interpretative approach we should use when looking at cures of those possessed by demons.

Of course, the Fathers of the Church specifically define purification as the release of the heart and the nous from the domination of thoughts (*logismoi*) and passions. So as to understand exactly what the holy Fathers mean when they speak about purification, it should be emphasised, as mentioned in other sections, that the human soul has two faculties: the noetic faculty and the rational faculty. Through the noetic faculty (nous) man comes into contact with God, and through the rational faculty he knows the world around him. In their natural state, the noetic faculty is located in the heart and has remembrance of God, and the rational faculty is in the brain and forms thoughts. When these faculties are confused and the thoughts of the mind take possession of the nous and go down into the heart – into the passible part of the soul, where anger and desire are – it creates impurity of the nous and heart. Thus purification in the Orthodox tradition is understood as the liberation of the noetic faculty (nous) from thoughts, good ones as well as bad.

"What is purification? Purification means that all thoughts leave the nous and only one remains. This thought is the remembrance of God, the impression on man's heart of the remembrance of God, which now works twenty-four hours a day."

In its fallen state the nous is dominated by many thoughts. It is out of order and it needs to be activated.

"We put into action something that is inactive: the nous. Purifi-

cation takes place. We clean the nous thoroughly. We throw out of the nous all concepts and thoughts. We make it a nous with a single thought. It has one thought instead of many: single-thought prayer begins. This is the cure of the nous and the return of the memory. The nous recovers the memory it had lost."

Thus someone begins with external things, by avoiding sin, but subsequently progresses to his inner world.

"We see in the Fathers that there is purification and also illumination. We have stressed that purification is not purification solely in the moral sense, but in the moral sense that has ascetic significance. Thus purification for the Fathers is an ascetic state which man reaches after a struggle, not simply to avoid sin –because avoiding sin is an integral part of asceticism– but to purify the heart.

Purification of the heart does not only mean avoiding sin. Purification of the heart means that thoughts leave the heart and go to the rational faculty. All thoughts and the way someone thinks are restricted to the rational faculty, so that the heart is left free of thoughts. It is left with one thought, prayer alone. This is extremely important. Once it is acquired, this is called prayer of the heart or single-thought prayer. It is one thought, the prayer itself, which constitutes constant remembrance of God. This is purification of the heart according to the Fathers. It is not simply avoidance of sin. Here in Greece a puritanical conception of the state of purity prevails."

A basic teaching of the Fathers is that all thoughts, good and bad, must be emptied out of the nous. Thoughts, of course, even thoughts of evil, should exist in the rational faculty, because otherwise man cannot live in his environment. So when the Fathers say that we should not have thoughts, they do not mean that we should expel thoughts from the rational faculty, the mind, but from the nous that acts in the heart.

"The nous must be purified of all preconceptions. But what do the Fathers mean? They mean both moral and immoral preconceptions. This is the strange thing, that one has to reject all thoughts."

Some people who read patristic writings and have not perceived the difference between the nous and the mind, think that all evil thoughts

have to depart from the rational faculty, leaving only good thoughts there. However, this is not a correct interpretation, nor is it feasible.

"Someone who does this eventually becomes puritanical, or even goes mad. This is not the way to do these things. The aim is not to reject evil thoughts, because if someone does not know what evil thoughts are, how can he know how to avoid them? How will he reject evil thoughts? It's impossible.

It's as though you don't think of bad things, only good ones. But how are you going to be a spiritual father and direct people if you do not have, so to speak, bad things in your mind, that is to say, in your rational faculty. You have to know what bad things are. If you do not have evil in your head and the devil comes along, you will immediately become his victim, because you will not know how to discern any more. These things are not feasible.

The Fathers do not say that thoughts must be expelled from the rational faculty, because you cannot expel thoughts from the rational faculty. That is out of the question, because the purpose of the rational faculty is to think. When we say 'thought', *'logismos'*, we mean the content of man's rational faculty (*logiki*). Thoughts are not expelled from the rational faculty but from the nous. The nous must be purified of thoughts and completely emptied. It must get rid not only of bad thoughts but of good ones as well, and be completely empty. Only then, when the rational faculty is occupied with the basics of noetic prayer, can prayer move from the rational faculty to the nous, once the separation has been made. This is what the Fathers mean when they talk about purification."

In the patristic tradition purification from thoughts clearly takes place in the nous, so that it can act in the heart with only one word – the single-thought prayer.

"When the Fathers of the Church speak about purification of the nous, they mean that the nous should be emptied of good thoughts as well as bad ones. When the nous is empty and the passions have been defeated, the Holy Spirit comes and visits. Then the Spirit takes it upon Himself to pray in man's heart."

"When the nous is empty, all thoughts depart. Do you under-

stand what I am saying? This is not something amateurish, we do it as professionals. It is certain that this happens.

This will happen provided that someone is obedient. When he goes to a spiritual father who has noetic prayer, if the disciple really submits himself, there is no doubt that he will reach this stage. In the end he may go to Hell, but he will certainly acquire noetic prayer."

When someone has a hesychastic spiritual father he can learn noetic prayer. However, if he commits spiritual mistakes, he will lose this gift and will be condemned.

"The Holy Spirit's prayer within the heart cannot come to someone unless his nous has previously been emptied. It must be completely empty of both good and bad thoughts, of all thoughts. Why are they called thoughts (*logismoi*)? Because they are actions of the rational faculty (*logiki*), which have penetrated into the nous but ought not to be there. The rational faculty has thoughts. They must leave the nous and be restricted to the rational faculty.

Only the single-thought prayer should be in the nous: one thought and nothing else. This is the start of man's therapeutic treatment. The single-thought prayer means the existence of only one thought, which is the remembrance of God: 'Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on me a sinner.' One thought, the Lord of Glory, is within the nous; that is why it is called the single-thought prayer."

"When one sees the clear distinction between the nous and the rational faculty, one sees that cultivating the nous by means of purification and illumination is not unconnected with cultivating the rational faculty. The rational faculty is also cultivated in parallel, but it is cultivated in such a way that purification of the reason is not moral purification. It is not a kind of cleansing with an ethical aim. The aim of this purification is ascetic. Why? Because when the nous is purified, evil thoughts leave the memory, but so do good thoughts. It is emptied."

The important thing is that the nous is the centre of the five senses. When the nous is distracted by the creation it radiates out to the five senses and is contaminated. When it is purified of preconceptions and various thoughts, however, all the senses become one and the unified

concentration of the nous comes about. This is the purification of the nous.

"When we consider these issues today we think that purification means that we stop sinning. We stop stealing if we are thieves. We stop doing certain other things that we do: if we used to tell lies, we do not tell lies any more. We have limited the meaning of purification to purification from sinful acts. Sin means sinful acts, and purification means that someone stops doing sinful acts, doesn't it? This is the prevailing view.

But if you look at the Fathers, purification is not only this. This is only a part of asceticism. The real meaning of purification is that the nous itself, which is the centre of all the five senses, is purified. Then in the heart and nous the five senses are one sense, one single sense. There the five senses are united so that they become one. For that reason the energy of the heart ought also to be single. 'Single' means that it ought to stop being five senses and become one single sense. So once someone has concentrated his nous in his heart, he can guard his senses because he guards his nous. And provided his nous is engaged only in prayer, as he has reached this single energy of the nous in the heart, the problems of the five senses are also solved. All concepts depart from the heart and nous, everything that originates from the senses and the rational faculty, and this emptying of the nous is also its purification. After that, as the nous has been cleansed by constant remembrance of God and noetic prayer, the only thing that occupies the nous from then on is remembrance of God or unceasing prayer. Nothing else.

When someone arrives at this state he successfully resists temptations. Thus we see the phenomenon that ascetic Fathers who had attained noetic prayer used to go into brothels in order to save prostitutes, many of whom were held prisoner in the brothels. Why? Because they were in this state and were no longer affected by their surroundings; they were no longer susceptible to the influence of their environment. Instead of being influenced by their surroundings they themselves had an effect on their surroundings. Instead of being darkened by the environment they illuminated it. That is why the Fathers call them shining lights. They are shining lights."

What the Holy Scripture calls the (inner and spiritual) heart is the so-called passible part of the soul, its appetitive and incensive aspects. The pure nous ought to act in this part of the soul and direct it correctly, so that the heart is pure. Once the nous is purified it does not bring images and preconceptions of things perceptible to the senses into the heart (desire and anger). At the same time the nous, uniting all the senses and pronouncing the single-thought prayer, moves the heart to love and zeal towards God.

The Hindus know what emptying the rational faculty means, as they expel all thoughts, but they do not know what purifying the heart means. In particular, they do not know how the grace of God acts in man's heart and what it means for man to become a temple of the Holy Spirit.

> "The Hindus know how to purify the nous. But they do not know how to purify the heart. There is a difference between the heart, which works as a pump, and the nous. The place of the heart must be purified to enable the nous to pray within the heart. The Hindus purify the nous and empty it of all thoughts, good and bad.
>
> When they talk about purification of the nous, they empty it and do meditation, what they call transcendental meditation. They do this many times a day; some people twice, others three times. In this way they find repose and serenity. This has physiological consequences, because it calms the nerves and the individual gets through the day better. For instance, he does not quarrel so much with his wife, and so on. There is no doubt that the Hindus benefit greatly from the exercises that they do. The strange thing is that in the Hindu tradition there is no prayer. Nothing. They simply empty the nous and restrict thoughts to their rational faculty. This is the exercise they do.
>
> Our own monks do exactly the same thing, but they also purify the passions that lurk in the human heart. The heart is purified. And when someone is ready, as he believes in Christ, the tradition and so on, the Holy Spirit comes and prays in him. This does not happen to the Hindus."

Although the hesychastic tradition of the Fathers seems outwardly to have some similarities with Hindu asceticism, there are nevertheless

differences. In the Orthodox tradition purification of the nous is linked with purification of the passions and faith in God.

> "Ascetic practices are accompanied by purification of the nous, purification of the passions, faith in Christ and prayer. These all go together."

Purification of the nous and the heart also existed in the Old Testament. In fact in the fiftieth Psalm one of our petitions to God is: *"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."*

> "We remember the Old Testament, which speaks a lot about purification of the heart, and we have the fiftieth Psalm, which the priests say while censing. In it we see a whole prayer for the Holy Spirit not to go away, for there to be cleansing.
>
> The Fathers emphasise, on this point, that asking the Holy Spirit not to depart means asking not to lose noetic prayer. The Fathers teach that noetic prayer is not only in the New Testament and the Christian tradition, since the Prophets had noetic prayer."

For all these reasons the catechumens in the early Church had to learn in practice how the nous becomes pure and how it returns to the heart, so that the nous directs desire and anger to act naturally and supranaturally.

> "In the patristic tradition, which is the tradition of Holy Scripture, purification takes place, then one is baptised, receives Baptism in water, one's sins are remitted, and afterwards there is Chrismation."

It is clear from all the above that purification of the heart is possible for every human being.

> "In Orthodoxy, the very worst human being can be purified and reach illumination."

The purification of the heart "is a stage of divine knowledge". Dogma offers effective help in this.

> "Dogma is therefore a guide for those going through purification, and it continues to be a guide for those who go on to be illuminated."

Thus purification of the nous and heart orientate man towards illumination.

> "Purification is an orientation, a practical orientation which is very like the moral order that all the politicians and philosophers want. It is comparatively similar to these things. But when someone reaches this level of asceticism, illumination goes ahead as well."

Unfortunately this whole ascetic life, as experienced in the life of the Church and defined in patristic teaching, has been altered in the West by Western Christianity, and this altered form has been brought to Greece as well.

> "For that reason even purification has been reduced nowadays to morality. In Greece today being purified means being moral."

This alteration and change for the worse also has consequences for the whole liturgical life of the Church.

> "Due to the pietism that has come into Greece, purification has been changed from ascetic purification into moral purification. Also, some people said that the Canons say that we should take Holy Communion every Sunday, so we shall take Holy Communion every Sunday. In other words, provided we have been instructed in the faith and are moral, we ought to take Holy Communion every Sunday."

iii. Definition of Illumination of the Nous

After purification of the heart comes illumination of the nous, which is the second stage of man's spiritual perfecting. In this section, in addition to what has been written already, we shall identify what is meant by illumination of the nous, and what its consequences are for man.

First of all we should recall that in Paradise before the Fall, man was in the state of illumination of the nous, which is the first stage of theoria of God. This was man's state in Paradise.

It has already been stressed that the human soul has two parallel faculties: the noetic faculty and the rational faculty. In man's fallen state these two faculties are regarded as identical, and we speak of darkening of the nous. When these faculties are separated, and when the noetic faculty functions independently of the rational faculty, this is illumination of the nous.

"What is illumination? Essentially, illumination is not illumination of the rational faculty. Of course there is illumination of the rational faculty: one prays, goes to church, fasts. One orientates the rational faculty towards doing the right thing: liberating slaves, helping the poor, going voluntarily to give blood, all that sort of thing."

"For to the Fathers, illumination is not the enlightenment of the rational faculty but of the heart. Purification of the heart, illumination of the heart, which is not rational enlightenment but spiritual enlightenment – this is illumination. So this is the cure. The illness is darkening of the nous and the cure is illumination of the nous."

According to the Fathers, illumination takes place in the nous not the rational faculty, because if it happened in the rational faculty one would not be able to do any work. Subsequently the rational faculty is affected as well.

"Man has to be concerned with life's essentials, with the family, the community, work and so on. So he can only pray with the rational faculty at intervals during the day: Matins, Vespers, Midnight Office...The rest of the day he may try to pray while he works, but if he tries hard, he will not be a good worker, to say the least. They will regard him as lazy, as a shirker. He will not be an efficient worker. So he needs to separate his noetic faculty from his rational faculty. How is this done? By expelling all thoughts from his noetic faculty, from his nous."

"One does not need to be a philosopher to learn these things. The Fathers used to say that it was not necessary to be educated to reach illumination. Asceticism, not science and learning, leads to illumination of the nous. The Fathers lay great stress on this."

Illumination of the nous is mainly determined by the state of inner noetic prayer. When the nous is detached from the rational faculty and illumined by God's grace, it prays without ceasing.

"When there is purification of the nous, illumination of the nous begins. There are the newly-baptised and then there are the illuminated, and the illuminated are presumed to have constant remembrance of God. Their nous has been freed from the rational faculty,

the passions and so on, and is occupied only with prayer, noetic prayer, and the remembrance of God."

"In our tradition illumination is purification of the heart and the replacement of a multitude of thoughts with one single thought, which is a simple prayer."

"This was what the Apostle Paul meant by the words *'Pray without ceasing'* (1 Thess. 5:17). This is illumination proper. And this is what St Paul describes as illumination. In the early Church this is illumination."

"The knowledge that man gains through illumination is not philosophical knowledge but prayer. It is not rational knowledge but knowledge of prayer, because rational knowledge stays in the rational faculty."

"Illumination is an unceasing state. It lasts twenty-four hours a day and even during sleep."

"All prayers are words and concepts, so words and concepts are used in the experience of illumination by the Holy Spirit Himself. He takes the very words with which we pray, the Psalms and so on. The Spirit takes those same words and concepts and prays in us with our own words."

The release of the nous from the rational faculty is called freedom from captivity.

"The ending of this captivity comes about through the restoration of the unceasing remembrance of God to the summit of the soul's energies, called the nous, which is transformed from being a captive power in the grip of passions."

Illumination of the nous is not a technical method for separating the noetic faculty from the rational faculty. It is a state of visitation by the Holy Spirit. It comes about through the energy of the Holy Spirit.

"According to the Fathers of the Church, someone who receives this visitation of the Holy Spirit acquires illumination of the nous. The Holy Spirit enters man's heart, regardless of the rational faculty. The Holy Spirit gives us prayer and we acquire noetic prayer, noetic worship. We give God rational worship."

The absence of the Holy Spirit is the darkening of the nous.

"What is meant by a darkened nous? It does not have the Holy Spirit praying in the heart."

Illumination of the nous is the first stage of theoria. From it man ascends to the vision of the glory of God.

"Generally speaking, these experiences of God are divided into the stage of illumination and the stage of glorification. The stage of glorification is not a permanent state in this life. It lasts as long as someone attains to glorification and stays in that state, and afterwards he returns to illumination. The stable spiritual state is the state of illumination."

The experience of the illumination of the nous is lived through noetic prayer. If someone "has illumination, he has noetic prayer".

"We have those who are inspired by God, those who are in the state of illumination, who have noetic prayer, the prayer of the Holy Spirit in their heart. Why are they divinely inspired? Because the Holy Spirit Himself prays within them. This prayer is not their own: it is the Holy Spirit praying in them. This is divine inspiration. In the Church's vocabulary, these two things together are called theoria."

"According to the Fathers of the Church, illumination consists of words and concepts, but in the form of prayer. In the state of illumination there are words and concepts within the prayers. When someone has the prayer associated with the state of illumination, that is to say, noetic prayer in the heart, this prayer illumines his nous. He now sees through faith, by the testimony of the Holy Spirit, things within his heart that he did not see before. He sees them through faith and understands words and concepts spiritually, not philosophically.

He reads Holy Scripture. He understands the words and concepts, not from the point of view of philosophical method but from the point of view of methodology. Why? Because the words and concepts are regarded as medicines for man. Someone has medicines when he is ill, but when he recovers his health he does away with the medicines, doesn't he? We don't give healthy people medicines.

We give them to those who are ill, because they are ill. And because man is sick, he has the medicine of illumination. This illumination is made up of words and concepts in the form of prayer, unceasing prayer in the heart.

Well, this state of illumination is man's contact with God. It is the first form of communion with God, and man becomes a temple of the Holy Spirit. Why? Because the Holy Spirit prays in his heart.

If you take St Paul's Epistles and read them from this standpoint, you will gradually realise that this is reality according to the Apostle Paul. When he talks about speaking in tongues this is what he means. When he says *'I will pray with the understanding'* (1 Cor. 14:15) he means that he will pray with the rational faculty, because there is rational prayer as well, but he will also pray with the spirit, with the nous. He prays without ceasing in his heart, twenty-four hours a day, whereas one can only pray now and again with the rational faculty, because the rest of the time the rational faculty is busy with everyday tasks."

Whereas noetic prayer in adults acts with words that they know, in small children it acts without words. The nous prays with the words provided by the rational faculty. When, however, the rational faculty in small children does not have complete words, the nous prays in the way in which the child's unformed rational faculty expresses itself.

"The form of the words is irrelevant; it is sufficient that they come from the Psalms, from prayers of the Church and so on. The Holy Spirit prays with the same words as you say with your rational faculty. As the small child is not yet aware of words, when illumination happens to a child, it happens without words. There is no need for words, the remembrance simply exists. Small children have this remembrance. So when you take a small child and teach it to believe rationally as well, it can be a saint. At two or three years' old you can also teach it noetic prayer."

It is clear that noetic prayer in the heart is not something emotional. It is a real experience.

"Prayer in the heart is an empirical phenomenon, because when someone has prayer in his heart, he hears it. He is a witness that

he has this experience. It is not a fantasy. Illumination is an experience; glorification is an experience.

Then we have another phenomenon, another aspect of the subject. This is the religious side of the matter. Man has a faculty that we call the noetic faculty; it is not the rational faculty. The rational faculty is centred on the neurological system. The noetic faculty is centred on the heart. When the noetic faculty is separated from the rational faculty and prays and is restricted in the place of the heart, and when the heart acts as the priest and the chanter twenty-four hours a day, then the man is a temple of the Holy Spirit, on account of this experience."

"Thoughts must go and the individual must be placed under the supervision of a spiritual father who can guide him, so that he really becomes a temple of the Holy Spirit and reaches the stage of having noetic prayer in his heart – that is how he will become a temple of the Holy Spirit. This is illumination proper according to the Fathers of the Church. Illumination is prayer, the state of prayer.

When one is in this state, the prayer may or may not be complete. In the early Church there was not only the prayer 'Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on me a sinner'. In the West noetic prayer was prayed with Psalms from the Old Testament. This is clear from the Apostle Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, when he says, *'singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord'* (Eph. 5:19). The words *'singing and making melody'* do not refer to the modern chanting that is done in Church. In the early Church the chanter chanted Psalms. When it says *'singing and making melody'*, nowadays we would say *'making melody'* not *'singing'* as well, as they mean the same thing. Then, however, there was a difference between the two terms. The Greek word *'psallontes'*, translated as *'making melody'*, meant singing Psalms."

"When someone is restored to this state he is illuminated. He becomes a natural human being and has communion with God. He is the temple of God."

Some people confuse rational and noetic prayer. Prayer with the prayer-rope is not noetic prayer.

"I have heard nuns saying, 'Now I shall pray noetic prayer'. They sit down, take the prayer-rope and think that is noetic prayer. If they use the prayer-rope they have noetic prayer. They do not understand that the prayer ought to be in the heart, not only in the prayer-rope and the brain. They do not know the difference between rational and noetic worship. They are not the same thing. They are different."

In the beginning one starts by repeating the prayer, 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me' with the mouth and the rational faculty, and at some point the prayer enters the heart.

"Because the beginner cannot manage this, as he has not yet distinguished between the nous and the rational faculty, he sits and prays as much as he can with the rational faculty, under the guidance of his spiritual father. He prays continually until the day when, instead of praying this prayer with his rational faculty, he begins to pray it with his nous in his heart."

The amazing thing is that, when the nous enters the heart and prays, the rational faculty is outside observing the movement of the nous.

"What the Fathers say is clearly observable: when the nous prays and when it enters and leaves the heart, the innate reason, that is to say, the rational faculty, sits and watches it. Someone who practises asceticism reaches the point where his rational faculty can see the nous entering and leaving the heart, because he is now in control. Whenever he wants, he concentrates, takes his nous and puts it into his heart, with his rational faculty watching.

When the nous itself prays without ceasing, this happens biologically, physiologically, here in the region of the heart. It takes place within the heart; this thing literally happens in man's heart, and man's innate reason actually sits and enjoys it. The reason may not be praying and only the heart may pray. When someone goes to church his heart prays and his reason prays as well, each more or less independently of the other. The reason sits and watches the heart and the nous, and listens.

These things are to be found scattered here and there in the Fathers of the Church and you will find them marvellously described in the book *The Way of a Pilgrim*. Wherever that pilgrim went he

was praying in his heart. He carried prayer about with him in his heart. It's an amazing phenomenon."

The state of illumination of the nous, which is expressed through unceasing inner noetic prayer, is not an abstract state. It is can be verified and checked by the spiritual father, and confirmed by those who have this same experience.

"Participation in the Church in the state of illumination is an experience that can be ascertained. This state can be diagnosed. A spiritual father knows that someone is in this state."

The spiritual father who has experience of noetic prayer helps his spiritual children to acquire noetic prayer.

"How does a Christian reach illumination when he does not have a spiritual father? It is the spiritual father, the catechist, who guides him to illumination."

"Afterwards we have illumination of the heart, which is this state of prayer. Thus in the patristic tradition illumination is a specific spiritual state, and it should be verified whether there is prayer or not. Only the spiritual father can verify this.

However, psychologists and psychiatrists are also obliged to study this issue, because it is a state of the soul (psyche) that has particular consequences. There is not only prayer, but it also has certain results."

Those who have spiritual experience of the illumination of the nous understand when reading various texts whether or not the writer has experience of this state.

"Some monks say that, when they read something by a Father of the Church, they know that the Father of the Church writes in different states. He is in a particular state every time he writes, and they can detect when he is writing in the state of glorification and when he is writing in the state of illumination. Because the state of glorification is not permanent. It lasts for a short while, perhaps a few days; it may be continuous vision; it may be enlightenment and not vision, and afterwards it goes back to being illumination. And once more there is prayer. When someone is in the state of glori-

fication he does not pray: prayer is abolished. Well, they say that when someone who has been through these states reads an author, he knows the state he was in when he was writing.

He can understand whether he was in the state of illumination and never reached glorification, or whether he was never in a state of illumination – he understands these things. That is why we cannot conceal ourselves from spiritual fathers."

Illumination of the nous is not an abstract, emotional, psychological state. It is inspired by the Holy Spirit and is experienced as unceasing prayer that has consequences for man's whole psychosomatic organism. It has repercussions for his whole being. We shall identify some of these.

Noetic prayer is also called resurrection of the nous, because the darkened nous is illumined and activated. This is very clearly distinguishable from similar techniques and states in Eastern religions.

"Ecstasy or resurrection of the nous in the state of enlightenment with unceasing prayer or remembrance of God, as well as in the state of theoria, has nothing to do with the ecstasies of the mystical philosophers and religions that seek to liberate the soul from the body and its passions.

Within the Orthodox Christian states of illumination and theoria, the mind, the memory and the natural energies of the soul and body not only do not cease to function, but they are also purified, illumined and glorified. The whole human being participates in purification, illumination and union, theoria, glorification or *theosis*. These last four terms designate the same revelatory and spiritual reality."

The illuminated human being is not dependent on the world or attached to material possessions.

"Poverty is an indispensable requirement for reaching illumination. Without being free of possessions one cannot reach illumination. It is impossible."

He acquires freedom from passions and his surroundings.

"Noetic prayer is the resurrection of the nous, the liberation of the nous from the rational faculty, the passions, the body and its surroundings. The nous exists for the purpose of being in contact

with God alone. The rational faculty exists for the purpose of enabling man to adapt to his surroundings, to created things, so that he can live in harmony with his environment."

The environment has no effect at all on someone in the state of illumination.

"Noetic prayer was not just for tortures in times of persecution. Through their asceticism the monks also had noetic prayer in this way, and the elements of nature were tamed. The elements of nature did not have the same effect on them as they have on everyone else."

Even if the illuminated man's rational faculty is occupied with the cares of everyday life, his nous still prays without ceasing.

"St Basil the Great writes that the one who suffers no interruption in the constant remembrance of God due to everyday concerns is a temple of the God. This is what we mean when we sing 'Let us lay aside all earthly cares'. How are these teachings of St Basil the Great understood within the tradition? This is noetic prayer. One should acquire illumination of the nous so that, when one is occupied with everyday cares, these earthly concerns do not interrupt the continuous remembrance of God. Why? Because the rational faculty is busy with earthly cares while the nous is unceasingly occupied with the remembrance of God. These things go on simultaneously: they take place at the same time, not one after the other."

He who has communion with God has the Holy Spirit within him and does not feel loneliness, that he is on his own.

"That is why a monk is never on his own, because he has the Spirit praying within him and He keeps him company in solitude, in the desert. Apart from that, when necessary, when He judges it to be for his good, God reveals Himself to him."

The illuminated human being is also freed from the law, because in this state the real law, the Holy Spirit, has entered his being. When there are many people who are illumined and have the Holy Spirit, they solve social problems and form a perfect community, as we see in the *Acts of the Apostles*.

"In this community of the parish or the monastery, where all

have reached at least the state of illumination, first and foremost the law has been abolished. The law is no longer required among those in the state of illumination, because the uncreated law of God, which is the energy of the Holy Spirit, acts within them.

The law for them is Christ Himself in the Spirit, Who dwells within their heart and prays, and they are guided by God Himself. These people have no need of the law and do not require prisons and courts of justice. For that reason the bishop is the judge for the parish. We have a separate court for the needs of Christians.

This is why Christians were not allowed in earlier times to resort to secular courts. It was considered that Christians who have reached illumination have no need of secular courts. Why? Because they have now gone beyond the laws of society, even the laws of the Old Testament, depending on their spiritual state. A parish or a monastery with such Christians is the ideal community. This is the ideal society."

Someone who is in the state of illumination of the nous is completely transformed.

"This also has a therapeutic aspect. Someone who does not reach illumination is self-centred. He is dominated by the instinct of self-preservation and becomes acquisitive. He wants to become rich, to acquire possessions, to do things, to find security, and he has all sorts of strange hostile attitudes towards his fellow human beings, to the point of committing murder, stealing and telling lies.

These states are not cured simply by faith in the Gospel. There are many people who believe in the Gospel. Priests sit all day long telling us to love one another, and no one tells us how to love. Love *'does not seek its own'* (1 Cor. 13:5). How can someone acquire this love? How is it done?

Modern psychologists and psychiatrists have some idea, as they have to intervene with certain therapies for man's personality to cure abnormal states and so on, to make him more normal. They themselves define what 'more normal' means, what man's normal state is from the point of view of society and relationships with other people."

"When this illumination of the nous and mind begins and becomes

an integrated and stable state, selfishness, egoism and self-centredness are gradually replaced by love which *'does not seek its own'* (1 Cor. 13:5).

When someone reaches this stage, he has reached theoria and is on the way up to glorification. By the will of God and His grace, he may acquire ecstasy of the nous. Then the uninterrupted remembrance of God is replaced, beyond all expectation, by glorification, that he may know the vision of God, at first through a glimmer of the radiance of Christ's glory, later through the vision of the divine glory, and finally, either when the body dies or beyond the grave, through continuous visions or vision of the divine glory, which radiates out from the human nature of Christ to him and the saints."

The illuminated human being acquires unselfishness. Selfish love changes into unselfish love and he is no longer a slave of self-love.

"Prayer is highly significant in the cultivation of the human personality. This not only has eschatological significance for the Day of Judgment, when we shall see God as Light and not as fire, in order to avoid Hell and participate in Paradise. This is not just a matter of eschatological importance. It also has certain social consequences. The relationships of someone who has this prayer with his fellow human beings are different from other people's relationships. First and foremost he is not in the grip of selfishness. He has been overwhelmed by unselfishness.

This spiritual method produces unselfish human beings, so it has social consequences for treating the human personality. Today psychiatrists and psychologists have reached a conclusion. They have been searching for many years to discover the normal human being, to find out what a normal human being is. Many books have been written and research studies undertaken, and the bottom line is that they realise that everyone is more or less ill, and no one can be described as a normal human being."

"The servant of sin is ill because his personality is suffering on account of the fact that his noetic faculty is not functioning or functions vestigially. The perfection of love comes about through the appearance of Christ 'in glory' to the one who is spiritually vigilant. He reaches glorification, love comes and he is perfected. Such

people are the saints of the Church. They are not people who did moral deeds. They are people who have been cured in the core of their personality."

It is not enough for someone to do good works. He must have selfless love.

"This is how the Fathers interpret the withered fig tree that was full of leaves but had no fruit. The leaves are man's good works. Thus someone who has good works but lacks the fruit of unselfish love, which is another fruit of the state of illumination and glorification, is a tree that Christ will curse. That tree is of no use. Leaves, good works, are not enough for man's salvation."

Noetic prayer changes one's whole personality in a positive way. This is a real transformation, because through the energy of the Holy Spirit inner changes take place in how one thinks, acts and behaves.

"Someone who reaches noetic prayer not only experiences a change from selfish to unselfish love. He not only has what we could call morals, but his perception has also undergone a psychobiological change."

"The fact that the noetic faculty exists has nothing to do with theology, because everyone has a noetic faculty. In certain people it functions, in others it does not.

Here we have a strange phenomenon, that this is the basic point of contact between patristic theology – or biblical theology as we should call it – and medical science. This ought to be investigated, because the fact that a faculty exists in human beings that can be activated and do something specific has consequences for the formation of the human personality. It has repercussions for society and for the way people behave to one another. Rapacity is checked, savagery ceases, and all these things are replaced by an overwhelming love for humankind.

A real change takes place in man. The individual changes substantially. He is no longer a normal human being in the sense of being like everyone else. His psychological make-up is formed in such a way that he becomes something different. He has love that *'seeks not its own'*. His behaviour towards other people is not mor-

alistic. This is not due to some sort of 'moral law'. It is not because he went to Sunday school and learnt nice lessons about Christ and the saints, and he is going to imitate them. No. A change occurs in the core of his character.

The transformation is substantial. A real change takes place. It is a change from within. It is not external, due to the fact that we impose laws and say that you mustn't do this or that. The human being now acts spontaneously and judges things differently from everyone else. It is a real change. So here, in this place (the heart), where man's personality is changed, the Fathers say that this is where theology begins. Here."

In the state of illumination man acquires freedom of spirit.

"Because these people existed throughout the period of Turkish domination, Orthodoxy was not wiped out. If the Orthodox in those days, under Turkish domination, had been like they are today, Orthodoxy would have disappeared. This is the bitter historical fact.

Someone who is in the state of illumination is free, according to the Orthodox Church. That is why we say in church 'Peace be with you all', because peace is like that. *'My peace I give to you'* (John 14:27). When He says that He gives them peace it means that He gives them the Holy Spirit, prayer in the heart. This is how a man finds peace, justification, reconciliation with God. He begins to become a friend of God through illumination, and later with glorification he becomes 100% a friend of God and free.

This is man's freedom, when he reaches the point not just of being liberated from self-interest, which happens in the state of illumination, but of being freed from servitude to nature and its elements in the state of glorification, because he is nourished by God Himself and he can go for years and months in that state, if it continues. The best way to study this is for us to go back to the lives of the saints and see these things there and realise that sin is a lack of illumination. Freedom is from illumination up to glorification. These things are very simple and constitute the therapeutic treatment of the human personality. That is why I say that if Orthodoxy were to appear today at its height, and not in its decline as at present, it

would be regarded in every respect as a positive science and would be superior to psychology and psychiatry."

When man has the Light of God within him, he himself is light, as Christ asserts: *"You are the light of the world"* (Matt. 5:14).

"Christ's words *'You are the light of the world'* mean that you who are in the state of illumination are the light of the world. You Christians are not the light of world simply because you believe in Christ."

Someone who has the light of God knows what the Orthodox tradition is. He passes on the tradition and illumines others.

"When we speak about the Holy Tradition, the essence of the Holy Tradition, its core, is illumination, handing on the torch. One becomes a shining light to illumine others.

Thus illumination is the essence of Christianity. The illuminated shed light. Christianity is nothing other than handing on the Light. Christianity is not the bishop or the priest. Christianity is handing on the Light, which is diagnosis and cure. And the cure is man's illumination. That is why we say nowadays: 'You have been justified, anointed and illuminated'. Often these days the expression 'You have been illuminated' has been reduced to a mockery."

When someone is illuminated by the Light of God he also sees God's energy in the whole of creation.

He loves God unselfishly and becomes God's friend.

"Someone in the state of illumination transcends fear and selfishness and reaches the point when he begins to love God and other people without considering his own self and his interests.

When he becomes a friend of God, he even quarrels with God – I don't know if I am putting it correctly – the friend argues with God on behalf of his fellow human being, as Abraham did. Why? He becomes a joint-king with Christ. 'Joint-king' means that he is no longer a servant. The man becomes god by grace. In Orthodox society there is no servility."

A distinction is made between faith that comes by hearing and faith based on theoria. Those at the stage of illumination of the nous have

this second type of faith, which is why they confess it. Thus they endured all forms of martyrdom, as the Light of Christ had entered their whole being. If someone was unable to endure martyrdom, if he did not confess the faith and did not want to become a martyr, that was a sign that he was not in the state of illumination of the nous.

"It was natural, based on the experience of illumination, for them not to give way and to undergo martyrdom. In the period of Turkish domination we have the same tradition with the New Martyrs.

Those who had denied Christ and had [temporarily] become Muslims, or even those who had been born Muslims but became Christians, were helped to escape to monasteries. They went through ascetic training to enable them to go and confess their faith in Christ publicly, and to undergo martyrdom without giving way. Their martyrdom caused great celebration in the Church, because it was a testimony to the continuing existence of the truth of Christ.

This perception of martyrdom is very clearly recorded by Ignatius of Antioch. If one reads St Ignatius carefully, it is clear that he is writing about noetic prayer and approaching martyrdom with this inner conviction."

Christ Himself, speaking about the martyrdom that the Apostles would undergo, said, *"You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptised with you will be baptised"* (Mark 10:39). Martyrdom is Baptism and the fruit of noetic prayer and theoria of God.

"The fact that someone had denied Christ was proof that he was not in a state of illumination. If he had been in a state of illumination, which is noetic prayer, he would have been unable to deny Christ. The fact that he denied Christ was due to him not being in a state of illumination, so he could not take Holy Communion. Not because the Church wanted to punish him. It was simply in recognition of the fact that he was not in the state of illumination."

"In the early Church anyone who gave way under persecution and tortures and denied Christ was regarded as not being in the state of illumination. If someone was overwhelmed by the fear of bodily mutilation and denied Christ out of fear, it was evidence that he did

not have divine grace and therefore was not in the state of illumination. So he ought not to take Holy Communion."

Above all, someone whose nous is illuminated, which is called the first stage of theoria, may, if God so wills, also see the glory of the divinity.

"If I do not reach illumination I am not ready to face the glory of God."

We observe this in the case of the Apostles. They had been illuminated by God, so the risen Christ appeared to them.

"Christ appears for their perfection, as He does to all those who reach illumination, that is to say, on the way to glorification."

This means that someone in this state participates in sanctity.

Illumination of the nous is also proved by the relics left by the saints, as through their nous the grace of God is transmitted to their body as well.

"If someone has arrived at illumination and noetic prayer, provided he is faithful to the end, he will leave sacred relics."

"I wonder now whether purification and illumination can exist without sacred relics. Because sacred relics are the result of illumination. One who is in the state of illumination reaches glorification – the vision of God – in the next life or even in this life. He leaves sacred relics that emit fragrance and so on. Here we have empirical evidence for the man's spiritual state when he was alive. He leaves sacred relics that are fragrant and work miracles."

This is the theology of the Church with regard to illumination of the nous. Unfortunately, however, in the West illumination was linked with the rational faculty, with speculation. This also influenced many Orthodox, who associate illumination with the cultivation of reason, instead of regarding illumination as connected with the nous and prayer.

"For Augustine the nous is not occupied with prayer but with the archetypes. This is illumination as far as Augustine is concerned. From the Orthodox point of view this is terrible; it is an awful delusion."

In order for someone to acquire illumination of the nous and un-

ceasing noetic prayer – the visitation of the Holy Spirit – the presence of a spiritual father, who knows these matters from experience and can guide him spiritually, is indispensable.

> "To acquire noetic prayer one needs to have a spiritual father who has noetic prayer. This is fundamental, because it is impossible, or all but impossible, to learn noetic prayer by reading about it. Nothing comes of reading. One must have a spiritual father. That is obvious."

The spiritual father, referred to as a catechist, guides people by the energy of the Holy Spirit to progress from purification to illumination. He is also referred to as a teacher.

In this sense it is possible to be a spiritual guide even without being a member of the clergy. We are not referring to the Mystery of Confession but to spiritual guidance to enable someone to reach noetic prayer.

> "When someone is at the stage of illumination he is a spiritual father even if he has not been ordained. He may have murdered people, but if his heart has been purified and illuminated, that illumination makes him equal to all the others.
>
> The fact that he is spiritually equal does not mean that he will necessarily be ordained. He may never be ordained because he has impediments and cannot be ordained. Nevertheless he can be a great saint of the Church. The clergy do not have a monopoly of this therapeutic treatment. Treatment can be given by anyone at all who has noetic prayer, whereas the clergy celebrate the Mysteries. These are two different things, so in Orthodoxy they were always separated. The celebrant is concerned with the rituals. But someone who has reached illumination will be the spiritual father."

This is a living tradition in the Orthodox Church. There are always living spiritual organisms who must be sought out by those who aspire to this life.

> "Someone who does not understand about illumination and glorification, even if he is a theologian or a university professor and reads, will say 'Forget it! Don't waste your time on those superstitions and myths...' If this were so, then that's the end of Holy Scripture as well, and Moses is completely worthless.

But we have living people who are like that. There are such people alive, who have noetic prayer and attain to divine vision, and these experiences are realities. But in order to know that they are realities one has to go and search out these people. If such people do not exist and this tradition has disappeared, a science has disappeared.

If today doctors disappeared and only their books remained, and we read them without having the living tradition of medicine, it would not be possible to revive medical science as it is now. The same would apply to all the sciences, if the living tradition were lost. So in the case of Orthodoxy too, if the living tradition were to disappear, Orthodoxy would be forgotten. As in the West the tradition vanished and it was forgotten."

The subject of noetic prayer is wonderfully described in *The Way of a Piigrim.*

"If you want to have a concise and very brief idea of this, I implore you to read – I could even make it compulsory as part of the class, if I wanted, and threaten to set a question on the book – it is a very small book called *The Way of a Pilgrim.* Please read that book, *The Way of a Pilgrim*, at least the first book, as I am not sure if both books exist in Greek. Two books have been translated and it is not certain whether they are both by the same author. There was a Russian pilgrim, what we might now call an illiterate peasant – nowadays we would say he was illiterate, although the illiterate are often more learned that the literate. He found a spiritual father, learnt noetic prayer and describes how he acquired it."

This simple man had such a tradition that he read the *Philokalia*, which circulated before the 1821 Revolution in the region of the Ottoman Empire and also spread outside Greece "to the other parts of Romanity, Epirus, Macedonia, Thessaly, Thrace, Pontus, Cappadocia, Asia Minor, the islands, Crete, all the Middle East, as far are the Danube, as far as Russian Bessarabia."

"Then there is another book which has been published in Greek, about Father Silouan. That is very important as well, because it is full of patristic theology, it is completely patristic. It contains the

most profound epistemological problems, without him realising it. Because he did not know philosophy, the history of philosophy, psychology, psychiatry and so on, he was not in a position to evaluate the things he said. But the things he said and wrote have amazing significance for the history of philosophy and epistemology. Amazing significance.

I fear that here in Greece those who read *The Way of a Pilgrim* and *Elder Silouan* read them in a pietistic and sentimental way. To read these books sentimentally and pietistically is a very serious mistake, because these books are neither about emotions nor about pietism. They are extremely serious books from the psychiatric, psychological and philosophical point of view, and they ought to be read seriously, not to stimulate the imagination of the pious.

This is what happens here in Greece. Pious people may read a book by Kierkegaard or a French writer, then something by an English writer and something on prayer by a German writer. They may read the life of Christ by an Italian author, and also read *The Way of a Pilgrim* and *Elder Silouan*, without understanding that there is a difference and regarding them all as the same. They mix up everything together.

They may pick up a book on piety written by the devil himself without realising it. So a great deal of caution is needed, caution and a lot of prayer. Precision in prayer is extremely important."

iv. Definition of Glorification

After purification of the heart and illumination of the nous comes glorification, which is the third stage of the journey towards perfection. Glorification is linked with theoria, which is the vision of the glory of God. When we say glorification we mean vision or theoria of the uncreated energy of God, which is seen as glory, as Light. Purification – the rejection of all thoughts (*logismoi*) from the heart and the transformation of the passible part of the soul (desire and anger) – must come first, as well as illumination of the nous, which is noetic prayer.

It should be stressed at the outset that glorification is an experience; it is not speculation or philosophy.

"Glorification is an empirical state. It has nothing to do with metaphysics."

Man is not capable of arriving at this state on his own, but he is empowered by God. Thus glorification is a gift of God to the one who has struggled to keep His commandments. The Psalmist writes: *"In Your light we shall see light"* (Ps. 35[36]:10).

"There is no question of man being capable of knowing God. This is impossible. Only someone who is within the uncreated Light sees the uncreated Light. One must be in God to see God. Man sees God through God."

In the patristic tradition this ability to see God is called "an uncreated self-revealing eye". There are many words that define what glorification is. Someone who is glorified, who is in this spiritual state, sees the uncreated Light of God. He shares in the Light and this is called glorification. Then man participates in the glory of God. Glorification is participation in the glory of God, in the uncreated Light. It is also referred to as man's union with God.

"Here union means glorification, divine vision."

When someone participates in the Light, in God's glory, he acquires union with God, and this offers knowledge beyond human knowledge.

"In the tradition, union itself is called the glorification of man or *theosis*. Man becomes god by grace, during the vision of God, if he ever reaches this point."

"This is called glorification. When man is glorified it means that he sees the glory in which he stands. This experience of glorification fills the pages of the Old Testament and the New Testament. Occasionally some clever professor here in Athens would ask me, 'Where do you find *theosis* in the Old Testament? It isn't there; the word *'theosis'* is not there.' *Theosis* is not there, but glorification is. The Apostle Paul uses the word 'glorified'. When someone is glorified, he says that we ought to rejoice with the one who is glorified (cf. 1 Cor. 12:26). Who is the one who is glorified?"

He is the one who undergoes *theosis*, because then man is sanctified by the grace of God.

"Man's sanctification means *theosis*, participation in glory."

Glorification (*theosis*) is also described as divine vision or the vision of God.

"For the Fathers of the Church, glorification is nothing other than divine vision. When the Fathers say *'theosis'* or 'glorification' they are referring to divine vision, seeing God's glory. When someone sees the glory of God, this means glorification. So the fact that the Prophets in the Old Testament see the glory of Christ means that they reach glorification. And as there is glorification in the Old Testament, it also exists in the New Testament."

"Divine vision is glorification, theoria. Glorification is divine vision because without attaining to divine vision, glorification, man cannot see God. He sees God through God."

"Glorification is the surest knowledge about God. Glorification transcends understanding, which is why St Gregory the Theologian says, 'It is impossible to conceive God'. Even the one who reaches glorification does not conceive God. It is not only to unbelievers and non-philosophers that he says, 'It is impossible to conceive God'. Conceiving God is impossible for everyone, including the glorified.

Even someone who arrives at glorification does not conceive God and he understands that he does not conceive Him. So he knows without knowledge, he conceives without understanding, he hears without hearing, he sees invisibly, and so on. All this patristic terminology, when they talk about glorification, is a terminology based on reality."

The experience of God as Light is called glorification, *theosis*, divine vision, union and knowledge. This state is an experience of Pentecost.

"Every glorification is nothing other than a repetition of Pentecost for us. So those who reach glorification have equal grace with the Apostles at Pentecost. There is no difference, at least from the patristic point of view."

Glorification is linked with man's salvation.

"Man was created for glorification. Nowadays we say that glorification is salvation. But man fell from the state of glorification."

As has been stressed elsewhere, there are degrees of theoria.

"What is theoria according to the patristic tradition? There are two stages of theoria. Theoria is illumination, in other words, noetic prayer, and also glorification. Both are called theoria. These are the two stages. Only when someone attains to illumination or glorification, particularly illumination, which is the first degree, is he permitted to theologise and to teach others, to be a spiritual father."

"Theoria has two levels. The first is the state of prayer; but enlightenment, vision and continuous vision are also called theoria. Enlightenment is the beginning of glorification. At the lowest stage of theoria there is no glorification yet. At the higher stages there is glorification as well.

In those moments when someone is in a state of glorification, prayer ceases. The divine vision itself takes the place of prayer, so one does not pray but has the vision of God. When the experience of glorification comes to an end, one returns to prayer. The state of glorification is not a permanent state.

A book has now come out that has a chapter on glorification, and it gives the impression that the state of glorification is permanent. It is not a permanent state. Glorification can be enlightenment lasting one second; then there is the vision that can last from five minutes, half an hour, I don't know how long; then continuous vision for forty nights – it could go on for a year, as long as God wills, and this is called continuous vision. However, glorification comes to an end."

"There is theoria associated with glorification and theoria associated with illumination. Both these states are divine inspiration. The state of glorification, however, is not permanent. It may be enlightenment, it may be a simple vision that lasts a few seconds or a few minutes, I don't know how long. It may even be continuous vision. But it is never permanent because anyone who reaches glorification comes back to illumination.

There are those in the state of illumination who never reach glorification, because they did not have the spiritual need to reach glorification. Glorification is given by God, not just to meet the personal need of the glorified but usually to meet the need of other people."

During *theosis*-theoria-divine vision-glorification, the whole human

being, both soul and body, participates. It is not a psychological or sentimental state affecting the soul. The human body is also glorified.

Patristic teaching speaks all the time about *theosis* and defines what it is. It links *theosis* with glorification, the vision of the glory of God, divine vision, union, communion and knowledge. All the same, it can be observed that various Christians misinterpret this experience of divine vision.

"Augustine had no idea about illumination and glorification. He completely missed the point on these issues, because he followed the path of the Platonists. The Franks copied his writings and read them, and Augustine's whole spirituality and piety entered theology up until the modern era."

"The Apostles who saw Christ in glory reached glorification. There is a problem here on account of the modern Russian preoccupation with the subject of glorification, which has also influenced the Greeks here in Greece. They imagine glorification as an injection of divinity: that we do an inoculation and give it to people and fill them with divinity; that this is something that comes into us through the Mysteries and so on.

This, however, is not how the Fathers understood glorification, because according to the Fathers glorification means seeing Christ in glory. Glorification is beholding Christ in glory. In the Old Testament when a Prophet saw Christ in glory that is the Prophet's glorification."

"There is obviously some confusion on these issues.

Glorification has now disappeared from modern Greek theology, and if you look at the old textbooks you will rarely find a mention of glorification, very rarely. Only now and again, when they refer to the Fathers, they may use the word 'glorification'. It has mostly been replaced by the word 'sanctification'."

Glorification exists in the Old Testament as well, but there is a difference between glorification in the Old and New Testaments.

"In the Old Testament we also have glorification, *theosis*. There is no disguising the fact that when a Prophet is within the glory of God and sees His glory, this is glorification."

There is, however, a difference, because in the Old Testament those who beheld God were taken to Hades, as death had not yet been abolished.

Also, the major difference between glorification in the Old and New Testaments concerns the human nature of Christ.

> "In the Old Testament when someone reaches glorification he has a divine vision, but he does not see Christ in the flesh, because He is not yet incarnate. He sees Christ unincarnate, bringing the Father in the Holy Spirit. The experience of glorification is therefore a revelation of the Holy Trinity in the Old Testament. As we have a revelation of the Holy Trinity in the Old Testament in the experience of glorification, the fundamental question is: What is the difference between the Old and New Testaments?
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> The most fundamental difference is certainly that whenever the Word appears in the Old Testament He is unincarnate, whereas in the New Testament He appears in the flesh, as the incarnation comes in between. The most basic difference, therefore, is the incarnation. After the incarnation it is impossible for anyone to experience glorification and the vision of God without the human nature of Christ."
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> "In the Old Testament there is glorification without the human nature of Christ. Every Prophet reached glorification without encountering Christ's human nature, as the Word was not flesh. Every Prophet, however, knew Christ Himself. He spoke with Christ as friends speak to one another. Thus Christ appears to His friends both before and after His incarnation. Christ is already in communion with His friends in the Old Testament."

There was theoria of God in the Old Testament and before Pentecost, but it was markedly different from theoria of God after Pentecost.

> "According to the Fathers who interpret Holy Scripture, the experience of Pentecost is the highest experience of glorification prior to the Second Coming. There is nothing higher than Pentecost, nothing superior to Pentecost. Why? Because it is the glorification that existed in the Old Testament with the addition of the incarnation. In the Old Testament glorification has neither the incarnation nor salvation. It is glorification without salvation, so even the glorified died. They were in the power of death. There was no salvation

and no incarnation in the Old Testament. Now, however, at Pentecost we have incarnation."

Man was created for the purpose of reaching the vision of God, theoria of God's glory, glorification.

"Man was formed to be in a state of illumination or glorification."

"The aim of Holy Scripture is to lead man to divine vision, to glorification, that he might see Christ in glory."

Everyone can reach this state of glorification.

"Let me tell you something. The way things have turned out, one can at least suspect that it is easier today to reach glorification in the world than in a monastery. There are monasteries and monasteries, monks and monks. That is the problem."

During the experience of glorification-theoria various changes occur in man's psychosomatic constitution. He remains the same, he does not lose touch with reality, but he is transformed and experiences Adam's state before the Fall, and the state of the saints after the Second Coming of Christ.

"He who is glorified goes beyond words and concepts and beholds uncreated reality, which bears no resemblance to them."

"If someone sees a created thing and thinks he is seeing God, this means that he will never arrive at glorification, because he has reached the state of seeing created things that come from demonic energies and thinking that he sees God. He has only reached glorification when he sees what is uncreated."

In the course of theoria Holy Scripture, dogmas and even noetic prayer itself are done away with.

"Everything is abolished in glorification. Of course, when someone returns from the state of glorification, when his divine vision ceases, he continues once again with dogmas and his prayer. The Holy Spirit prays again within him, as before. The state of glorification is not permanent in this life."

The Apostle Paul writes to the Corinthians about *"visions and rev-*

elations of the Lord", when he was caught up to Paradise and heard ineffable words (2 Cor. 12:1-6).

He also writes that during the vision of God prophecies and knowledge are done away with and prayer ceases. *"But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away"* (1 Cor. 13:8-10).

"According to patristic theology, prayer will come to an end in the state of glorification. Prayer ceases to exist as long as glorification lasts. When glorification ends, prayer comes back again.

Knowledge too vanishes. Theology is no more. Because when it says 'knowledge' here it does not mean knowledge in general, only knowledge about God, not every kind of knowledge. Knowledge about God is abolished, because one sees Christ now 'face to face', one sees God Himself. But the knowledge of created things that someone has is not abolished, because he does not lose his senses. The Apostle Paul was blinded by the Light, but he spoke and heard while in this state. He did not eat or drink for three days, because that aspect of his natural functions ceased. However, when one returns from this state and prayer and prophecy begin again, one continues the work of edification. One preaches and teaches and so on."

"If someone reaches glorification now and again, a couple of times perhaps, the prayer of the heart ceases in the experience of glorification, it is abolished. So knowledge vanishes away as well, that is to say, the rational knowledge of the faith ceases, together with the knowledge associated with illumination. It ceases because someone in this state sees God by means of God. He sees the uncreated Light through the uncreated Light, and sees God through God.

Man on his own cannot behold God, because God can only be seen by means of revelation. Man sees with a vision that transcends vision. He hears with a hearing that transcends hearing, smells with a sense of smell that transcends the sense of smell and so on. This is not a natural state. It is not part of man's natural knowledge, but neither is it a supernatural revelation in the Western sense of supernatural revelations, because there is no understanding."

"There is no noetic prayer in the experience of glorification. Noetic prayer stops. And when the experience of glorification, of divine vision, ceases, noetic prayer starts up again. When someone is in the state of illumination, he prophesies and theologises using theology and Holy Scripture. When, however, he reaches glorification, he no longer knows God in prophecies and knowledge and prayers, but knows Him directly."

As long as glorification lasts, noetic prayer stops, because the nous beholds the glory of God. Rational prayer, however, does not cease. The one who sees God may be present in the Divine Liturgy and simultaneously see uncreated reality. He does not undergo Neoplatonic ecstasy during the vision of God.

"In glorification prayer ceases, and when one speaks to a colleague in a state of glorification, one uses names. Someone in a state of glorification is able to celebrate the Liturgy and to say the prayers of the Church as usual.

The prayer of the Holy Spirit with those words has been abolished within him, because he sees what is uncreated. When he sees what is uncreated, the prayer within him comes to an end, but rational worship does not cease. He can celebrate the Liturgy."

There is a connection between praxis and theoria.

"We have praxis that comes to completion in theoria. During theoria, however, praxis is never abandoned. Never. Perhaps a classical example of Orthodox theoria is St Symeon the New Theologian. In his biography, written by Nikitas Stithatos, we see the following paradox. The Apostle Paul underwent glorification first and was baptised afterwards, which is a strange phenomenon, because first he saw the uncreated glory on the road to Damascus and ascended to the third heaven, as he writes himself, and after this experience of glorification he was baptised. Something similar happened to St Symeon the New Theologian. First he had the experience of glorification and afterwards he was tonsured as a monk.

When someone attains to glorification, for as long as this experience lasts asceticism stops, because of the state he is in. He does not eat or drink or sleep or – forgive me for mentioning it – go to

the toilet, because the natural functions of his body are suspended while he is in the state of theoria of the uncreated glory of God. When, however, he comes out of this state, he continues practising asceticism again. He fasts and prays and keeps vigil and has noetic prayer. In the state of glorification, however, single-thought noetic prayer, the remembrance of God, comes to an end as we have God Himself. Remembrance goes; it is no longer needed.

Thus the highest form of theoria, which is glorification, is not a permanent state, whether it takes the form of enlightenment for a limited period, or the form of vision, which can last forty days and nights, as in the case of Moses. When someone returns to the state of illumination, although he has noetic prayer and so on, he practises asceticism, keeps all the fasts and is self-restrained. Asceticism is not abolished."

Although there is no suspension of the rational faculty, bodily functions are suspended. The saints teach from their experience that during divine vision the natural and blameless passions are suspended and the devil is rendered powerless.

"We know from the experience of Moses on Sinai and the experience of the saints, who like Moses reached theoria before their bodily death, that during this experience of glorification the natural and blameless passions are suspended in such a way that there is no hunger, thirst, tiredness, fear, uneasiness or sleep. The state of perfection is such that the devil becomes for the most part, if not completely, powerless."

When the glorified human being is in the state of glorification he lives within the glory of God. He is aware of the suspension of the natural functions of his body, though not of his soul, but he is in a natural state.

"In every other way he is in a natural state and talks and walks and so on in this condition, and teaches, until the vision of God ceases and he returns to illumination. Then noetic prayer, which had stopped during glorification, begins again. This is our Orthodox saint. Our saints are vastly different from the Hindus, they have nothing in common. The only similarity with the Hindus is the dis-

tinction between nous and reason. There is also no affinity at all with the ecstasy of the mystical religions or Neoplatonism.

Is it not of interest to dieticians that it is possible for someone to go for a year without eating, sleeping, drinking or going to the toilet? Such a state can last a week, a fortnight, a month, forty days, forty nights, or it can continue for a whole year."

All this is not theoretical but is recorded in the lives of the saints, in the *Synaxaria* of the Church, which are the real history of the life of the Church.

"Again and again in the lives of the saints, not only in the East but in the West, in the Western saints, the Western Romans, we find this phenomenon of glorification together with the suspension of bodily functions. If it lasts a week it can last a month. It can go on for a year or years on end. It depends on how long God wants someone to remain in this state, and on his own needs and his surroundings."

The hermits and stylites lived this phenomenon, strange as it seems to human reason. They not only returned to the state before the Fall, but ascended higher and lived states beyond the end of time. They had a foretaste of the life of the saints in Paradise.

"What did the monks do there in the desert? Why do we have those troparia about deserts and tears that watered the desert, and about those who lived where there was nothing to eat? How did they live? What were the stylites? They saw St Daniel the Stylite, who was covered with frost and snow every winter, and they did not know whether they would find him alive in the spring. How did he live in the ice and snow? How did the naked ascetics wander around in the mountains in the snow?"

Divine vision and theoria offer true theology. True theology expresses the experience of seeing God. Someone begins to theologise on reaching illumination. If God counts him worthy of reaching the vision of God and seeing His uncreated energy, at that moment of divine vision even theology stops, because he sees God Himself. When the experience of seeing God ceases, theology begins.

Theology is the expression and formulation in created words and concepts of uncreated reality.

"We ought to stop making a clear-cut distinction between Western and Eastern theology, as we usually do, and go in search of the result of theology. Wherever there is glorification, correct theology inevitably exists. Where there is no glorification, correct theology probably does not exist, even if those who put forward those types of theology are allegedly Orthodox.

The criteria should not be formally dogmatic but purely therapeutic. Only therapeutic theology is correct theology. This is the theology expressed in the lives of the saints."

"In patristic theology, noetic prayer is the foundation of theology and theologising. In the early Church someone was allowed to theologise only when he had reached illumination. He was called a theologian when he reached glorification. Someone theologises when he has noetic prayer, and he is called a theologian once he arrives at glorification. This is the historical usage of these terms."

"Someone starts being a theologian when he becomes a temple of the Holy Spirit. Without becoming a temple of the Holy Spirit, how can anyone become a theologian? And the theologian of the Church is pre-eminently the one who has reached glorification. He is a theologian.

That is why in our Church we very rarely gave the title of 'theologian' until the modern Greek state was founded. Before the foundation of the University of Athens, the theologians of the Church were St Gregory the Theologian, St John the Theologian, St Symeon the New Theologian, and after them we find a few others who are referred to as theologians in the Church. The main characteristic of those called theologians is that they reached glorification and beheld God. Such people are theologians in the highest sense, but what sort of theologians? Because in the state of glorification theology is abolished."

"The theology of the Church is an expression of the experience of *theosis*, man's glorification, when he attains to the revelation. Theology comes from the divine vision of the Prophets, Apostles, saints and all those who have been glorified.

It is an expression of an inexpressible reality. This expression cannot be comprehended rationally, but its only aim is therapeutic. Orthodox theology has no other purpose; its aim is therapeutic not philosophical. It never had a philosophical aim."

"Theology is a means. It is not an end in itself. Concepts are not an end in themselves; they are means."

"Orthodoxy theology means that someone sees, and on the basis of the experience of divine vision and glorification, he theologises. What does he see in the state of glorification? He sees all the dogmas."

"Essentially a theologian is someone in whom theology has been abolished, as he has reached the experience of glorification. Theology ceases in him, and because he lives in the state of illumination, he knows the aim of theology and prayer, which are the same thing. The one who prays theologises, and the one who theologises prays. Theology and prayer are the same thing."

Theology ceases during the experience because what the God-seer sees cannot be described using the data of human wisdom.

The one who beholds God sees that God is uncreated, which means that there is a vast difference between Him and created things.

"No one who reaches glorification has ever seen the Holy Spirit as created or the Word as created. He knows that the glory of the Holy Trinity is uncreated and that it is the natural glory of the uncreated energy of God. The Word has glory from the Father by nature and not by grace, and the Holy Spirit also has uncreated glory from the Father, not by grace but by nature.

All these central elements, which are the whole of Orthodox theology, come from the experience of glorification. When the Fathers theologise they do not theologise only from Holy Scripture, but from their own experience."

One can only come to the knowledge of God through divine vision.

After the experience of divine vision, the God-seeing theologian uses created words and symbols to express the uncreated reality as far as possible.

"Expressions about God are therefore symbolic. We have this

term 'symbolic theology' and we use symbols to talk about God. However, the purpose of these symbols is not that we might conceive God, but that we may be guided through these symbols to union with God, which is glorification that transcends understanding."

Through this knowledge derived from divine vision, the God-seer becomes a spiritual father, because he knows how to cure people and lead them to glorification. Sickness is man's departure from God and health is communion with Him, the vision of God.

"There is this interpretation that the theologian is 'advanced in theoria', that he is someone who has reached illumination or glorification, and he is also a spiritual father. He knows how to cure, so knowledge and curing people is the same thing. Knowledge is therapeutic treatment and therapeutic treatment is knowledge: these two go together."

The one who sees God has divinely inspired words to guide his spiritual children to glorification. He guides them using concepts, so that they may proceed "through purification to illumination and finally to glorification."

Apart from theology, the experience of glorification also has other consequences for the glorified. One of these is that someone who sees God is set free from every kind of servitude to created things.

"In the state of glorification he is also liberated from subservience to the elements of nature, because he is nourished by God Himself and he can go on in this state for years or months, if it continues."

"According to the Fathers of the Church, glorification is perfect freedom, and purification and illumination are the beginning of freedom."

When someone beholds God he acquires real love, which is unselfish.

"Glorification, the perfecting of man on the basis of a love that *'does not seek its own'* (1 Cor. 13:5), is not the same as the love that a good human being has. There may be similarities but it is not the same thing."

Since he is freed from the passions and the greatest passion is self-

love, he acquires love for God and other people. All the glorified become equal in their noetic energy. Equality cannot exist in human terms, because there are differences in the level of the rational faculty and in gifts. Those who are glorified, however, attain equality as regards their noetic faculty and theology: they have the same knowledge. At the same time, they detach themselves from material goods and identify with the poor.

"We have never ceased believing in the equality of human beings. Why? Consider the subject of equality. Equality of human beings from the Orthodox point of view is based on the fact that everyone has a noetic faculty, which is separate from the rational faculty. So someone may reach the heights of noetic energy and be glorified, and have no rational ability at all.

In the troparion for Pentecost, for the Holy Trinity, we sing: 'Blessed are You, Christ our God...' and so on. Christ took the fishermen and raised them to the heights of glorification. They were exalted above the earth and surpassed all human beings in glorification. And who were they? Illiterate fishermen. Their noetic faculty was raised as high as the experience of Pentecost, but nothing changed with regard to their rational faculty. If someone had given the Apostle Peter a mathematical problem, it is certain that he would never have been able to solve mathematical or geophysical or political problems. All the same, though, he is the leader of the Apostles.

On the one hand, someone may reach the summit of rational understanding and his noetic faculty may be a complete disgrace and his heart may be completely hardened. On the other hand, someone may reach the heights of noetic perfection and of rational perfection, because he has a good education. He may be at the highest level of both.

Again, someone's rational faculty may be at the lowest limit, so that he is completely dim, unintelligent and foolish, and his heart may be hardened. On the other hand, someone else may be half-mad and his rational faculty may not function correctly, but he may have a spiritual father who sets him free from the weaknesses in his reasoning, and he may get as far as glorification, even though he is completely uneducated.

From the point of view of spiritual equality, therefore, there is absolute equality between human beings, because everyone has a noetic faculty. The higher reaches of theology have nothing to do with the rational faculty. Do you follow what I am saying? From this point of view, Orthodox theology has an equality that exists in no other field. Because, whatever we may say, there will never be equality with regard to the rational faculty, because an individual's rational faculty is connected with his grey matter, with problems inherited from parents and so on. Whatever we may do, one pupil will sit examinations and get into university, whereas the other will sit examinations fifteen times and not get in. One pupil will get a school leaving certificate, another won't. There is clearly no equality in these matters, but in theology there is equality. We Orthodox theologians know more about equality that other people in society.

Next, equality in perfection also means equality in wealth. Someone who reaches glorification becomes rich, although in worldly terms he becomes poor. Because he is poor, he is on the same level as all the world's poor and becomes equal with the poor. So there is no social problem in this regard, as he never identifies with the rich but with the poor. This is automatic in Orthodox theology and cannot be otherwise, because if someone identifies himself with the rich it shows that he does not have noetic prayer. To have noetic prayer one must identify with the poor."

Another consequence of glorification and divine vision is that the man's body becomes a holy relic. As the whole human being shares in the vision of God, both soul and body are glorified. Thus when the soul separates from the body, the grace of God remains inseparably with both the soul and the body, and we have holy relics.

"Holy relics are the result of glorification, as the one who has attained glorification is suspended between immortality and corruption.

So when he dies his body does not disintegrate; it is preserved. There is some decay, but the identity of its cells is kept, that is to say, it is preserved to a great extent, not completely but to a great extent. However, this body is neither incorrupt nor does it completely decompose."

"What are holy relics according to the Fathers of the Church? Holy relics are a state that the God-seer reaches when he reaches glorification. They are in between incorruption and mortality. We have corruption and we also have incorruption. Someone who attains glorification has not become incorrupt but he has experienced incorruption, because the experience of glorification is described as incorruption according to grace. Glorification is incorruption according to grace.

Someone who has gone through this experience leaves holy relics, which keep their biological signs, their cells. There is skin and cells – everything is there, isn't it? The body has not undergone corruption, but this is not incorruption, because incorruption means that the organ is alive. This body is dead but it has not disintegrated. This is a phenomenon.

It is not a mummy. It is not mummified nor is this state due to chemicals, nor is it because the body was buried in ground so dry that it could not decompose. These relics are often found in ground that is full of moisture."

When someone attains to the vision of God's uncreated glory he acquires communion with God. After theoria he returns to the stage of illumination of the nous and noetic prayer is activated. If he is not careful, however, it is possible for him to go as far as denying God.

"There was a major dispute in the past between the 'Pure' [the Novatianists] and the other Orthodox, because the 'Pure' said that someone who had denied Christ under persecution should die without receiving Holy Communion. They left him in God's hands.

The other Orthodox used the argument that the Apostle Peter himself first passed through glorification at the Transfiguration, then after glorification he denied Christ, and Christ after the Resurrection reinstated him and he became an Apostle again – in fact, the chief Apostle. So we see that not only after illumination but even after glorification one can give way and make a denial."

Glorification is the perfecting of man, which is the purpose of his creation. Then man transcends all merely human things and lives in the body like an angel. People with a worldly mentality are unable to understand this state because they live an unnatural life.

"As far as the world is concerned, those in psychiatric hospitals are not the only ones who are mentally disturbed. From the world's point of view, those in the state of glorification would be considered mad.

We are not therefore surprised that even some Orthodox regard St Symeon the New Theologian as being somehow mad. If someone reads St Symeon the New Theologian without being attuned to what he writes, the reason he writes and the state he is in when writing, it is not difficult for him to think that St Symeon the New Theologian was mad."

This madness according to the worldly mentality, however, is the natural life of man, according to the reason for his creation and its aim.

c) The Glorified as the Foundation of Ecclesiastical Life

The glorified who participate in the glory of God – the Prophets, Apostles, Fathers, holy ascetics and saints – are the foundation and basis of ecclesiastical life. The Church is not an anthropocentric organisation but the glorified Body of Christ and a communion of glorification. Christ is its Head and its members are the glorified, who share in glorification to differing degrees.

All those who have experience of God are true members of the Church, as the Church "is not an abstract idea" but "those who have experience". The members of the Church are not defined according to their moral constitution, but according to the extent to which they partake of glorification and are glorified.

"We no longer have a human being who is good or bad. We have people who are illuminated or not, who are glorified or not."

The glorified have authority in the Church because they have acquired true and unerring knowledge of God. The people who follow the glorified have true faith. Knowledge of God is not the same as faith in God.

"If someone arrives at illumination and glorification he has the same experience as all the glorified and therefore exactly the same knowledge as the glorified. For that reason all the glorified throughout history have the same knowledge of God.

> Those who know about God through the glorified have correct faith in God. Correct faith in God, however, does not mean knowledge of God. Knowing God 'face to face' is different from believing correctly in God because we have the glorified as our guides. It is like the student of astronomy in relation to the expert astronomer who looks through the telescope. Exactly the same relationship exists."

The glorified are the unerring teachers in the Church and we rely on their teaching in order that we too may know God by experience. The teaching of the glorified is the created words and concepts expressing their experience of uncreated grace.

> "The glorified themselves have a knowledge that transcends knowledge, but they also use words and concepts when speaking to others. So Holy Scripture is not done away with. Holy Scripture is used by the glorified themselves, because it is the words and concepts by which other people are led to the same experience..."

Since the glorified are authoritative teachers, when they assemble in Local and Ecumenical Councils they formulate the teaching of the Church unerringly and with divine inspiration.

> "We find glorified saints not only in the East but in the West as well for many centuries. When these people convened in a Council they knew at once what the teaching of the Church is."

As the glorified are the basic criterion in the Church for determining the truthfulness of its members, in the early Church we observe the fact that bishops and priests were chosen from among the glorified and the Prophets. We see this in the *Acts of the Apostles* when Matthias was chosen to fill the place of Judas. He had to be a witness of the Resurrection of Christ.

Also, the clergy needed to be glorified, because only then were they genuine physicians who knew how to cure people and to lead them from darkness of the nous to illumination of the nous and glorification. The aim and mission of the Church is to make people glorified. The Church, as we have said many times already, is like a hospital and the clergy are like doctors.

This is the perspective from which we should view the virtue of

obedience. We do not obey every teaching that comes along. We obey the glorified, who have experience of God, because in this way obedience will lead to glorification and participation in the uncreated glory of God.

> "In the Orthodox Church obedience was never interpreted as blind obedience to someone in authority by reason of ordination, because someone is a bishop or someone is an abbot. No! Authority is spiritual authority.
>
> When someone is glorified or illumined and is skilled in guiding other people in therapeutic treatment, we are obedient to him in order to learn the method, until we reach a certain point ourselves. We obey someone like that, but not just anyone."

Obedience to "those initiated by experience" is necessary for progress towards glorification. This does not mean that the canonical institution of the Church is undermined or overlooked.

Prayer to the saints is also important because they remain glorified. They are friends of God and have boldness towards Him, so their intercessions are effective.

> "When the glorified depart to the Lord, they remain glorified. They do not cease to be glorified and to share in the glory of God, in the divine vision. That is why we pray to these people and call upon them to intercede for us."

Consequently the glorified are the basis and foundation of ecclesiastical life. They live the life of the first-formed human beings before the Fall, but they also share in the glorified Body of Christ. The Fathers interpret theological issues from experience, not by conjecture.

The impression has been created that the history of the Church is made up of the various events connected with the external activity of its members, persecutions, Local and Ecumenical Councils, schisms and divisions, heresies and wars. These things also form part of the history taught in theological faculties and schools as a special subject.

However, the real history of the Church is the life of the saints, the energy of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the faithful, the journey from the Sunday before Lent to Easter, and thence to Pentecost and the Feast of All Saints. These events are not merely external and historical. They

are not one-off events, but are repeated in the life of every believer who, through repentance and purification of the heart, arrives at Pentecost and participates in the energy of God that enables us to see Him, and celebrates on the Feast of All Saints.

"This is clear from the calendar of the feasts of the Church. We have Easter Sunday preceded by the Baptisms on Holy Saturday. Afterwards we go up to Pentecost with the Gospel of John, which is the 'spiritual Gospel' of the Church for those who have been baptised. Then we come to the day of Pentecost and afterwards to the Sunday of All Saints. This is the purpose of Pentecost."

"These are the living sermons of Orthodoxy. Orthodoxy is always based on the lives of the saints. The calendar of saints is the backbone of Orthodox theology."

6. The Mysteries (Sacraments) of the Church

The Church is neither an ideology nor a social or religious organisation, but the Body of Christ. The believer who takes part in ecclesiastical life is actually sharing in Christ's life. This comes about through the Mysteries (Sacraments), through which man receives the uncreated energy of God and is united with Christ, nourished by Him and glorified. Thus we understand that the Church is "signified in the Mysteries" and grace works in man in many different ways through the Mysteries. The Apostles and Fathers define a framework within which ecclesiastical life can be interpreted.

a) Unity of the Mysteries

The Church itself, as the Body of Christ and the community of glorified, is a mystery and the life of man within it is a participation in the mystery of glorification. Whatever takes place within the Church is a mystery, even prayer itself, as noetic prayer is a sign that someone has reached illumination of the nous and experiences the illuminating energy of God.

Generally, as we saw earlier, the faithful Christian participates by means of purification, illumination and glorification in God's purifying, illuminating and glorifying energy and this is participation in the mystery of the Church.

> "Glorification is the mystery of the Church par excellence. This is the mystery. Illumination too is the manifestation of the mystery of glorification, because glorification is Pentecost itself, as glorification has appeared in its final phase. When we say 'glorification', we mean Pentecost, which is the pre-eminent mystery of the Church."
>
> "When one reaches the stage of 'knowing the mysteries of the Kingdom of God', this means that one is at the stage illumination and glorification."

The pre-eminent mystery is the presence of God and participation in this glorious presence. The experience of this mystery of the Church comes after guidance by an experienced spiritual father.

> "Anyone wanting to learn the mystery of the Church from the patristic point of view ought to find a good spiritual father, have a prayer rope and pass through the various stages of perfection, from purification to illumination. And when he reaches glorification he will know all that someone living in this world can possibly know about the Church. From the perspective of human possibilities, this is complete knowledge of what the Church is."

Since the incarnation of Christ and the transformation of the Church into the Body of Christ, man's progress from purification to illumination and glorification comes about through the Mysteries (Sacraments) of the Church, through which he participates in the uncreated grace of God.

In the New Testament period purification, illumination and glorification are connected with Baptism, Chrismation and the Divine Eucharist. Thus there is unity between the Mysteries of the Church and the spiritual life, participation in the uncreated grace of God.

> "The tradition of the Church consists of the Mysteries (Sacraments). These Mysteries are the centre of the life of the Church. The Divine Eucharist, Baptism, Confession and so on are the core of the tradition and an expression of the inner life of the Church. The basis of all the Mysteries of the Church is the whole endeavour of Orthodox Christians to climb up the steps to perfection. These are summed up by the Fathers in the terms that we have mentioned so many times: purification, illumination and glorification. This is the core of the Orthodox tradition.
>
> All the sacramental services of the Church, all the Church's prayers, the whole effort of fasting and everything else have this single aim: that all Christians should go forward together to illumination, and through illumination to glorification."

In the tradition of the Church the Mystery of Baptism is closely linked with the Mystery of Chrismation, and through them man is set free from oppression of the devil and receives the adoption of the Spirit.

> "The path by which someone is set free from the devil is very difficult and requires a long period of prayer, fasting and instruction in the teachings of the Prophets and Christ. The heart has to depart from evil and turn towards Christ. One has to leave self-interest behind and be filled with the desire to die with Christ in Baptism.
>
> Baptism ought to be preceded by spiritual progress in a gradual preparation for crucifixion and death in the waters of Baptism and for adoption as a son through the seal of the Spirit."

Prior to Baptism the human being was living the life of the Fall, under the domination of the devil. He was living in death and mortality. Through Baptism and Chrismation he acquires communion with God. However, Baptism and Chrismation ought to be accompanied by Holy Communion in the Body and Blood of Christ, which he receives in the Mystery of the Divine Liturgy. Thus these three Mysteries – Baptism, Chrismation and the Divine Eucharist – are very closely connected.

> "The earlier communion with death and mortality should be transformed into communion with the life of God. Through death in Baptism man is resurrected to new life, through the life-giving seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit, which safeguards his adoption as a son by God. The indwelling of God in man through the Holy Spirit enables him to participate in the life of the Eucharist, in which all belong to one Body."

Man's participation in the Mysteries of the Church is neither a matter of form nor magical. Whether or not he receives the grace of God depends on his own efforts. God certainly acts, but man collaborates. And after the Mysteries he must struggle against the powers of darkness.

> "The restoration of man's communion with God and his neighbour through death in Baptism and through the gift of the Holy Spirit is not a magical guarantee against the possibility of becoming once again a servant of the devil and being cut off from the Body of Christ. With Baptism unrelenting war is declared against the devil and the powers of division and destruction. This war continues in the life of the Church, in which all belong to one Body. Giving up the struggle entails condemnation."

The unity of the three stages of the spiritual life (purification, illu-

mination and glorification) with the three basic Mysteries of the Church (Baptism, Chrismation and the Divine Eucharist) is inseparable. In the same way, the entire sacramental life of the Church is inextricably bound up with the hesychastic life of the Orthodox tradition.

"The Church lives in the context of Pentecost. Illumination – which is the aim of Baptism and is assumed to be identical with Chrismation, as Chrismation is illumination – is the heart of the Mysteries, and Pentecost is the heart of the heart. The two go together, because anyone who reaches illumination, when and if God wills, arrives at glorification. Glorification, however, is not a continuing state, and he returns to illumination. Glorification is not a permanent state in this life. Thus illumination is supposed to be a permanent state. If someone is not in the state of illumination it means, according to the Fathers of the Church, that he has fallen. He returns to illumination through the Mystery of Confession.

So we have the first Baptism, we have Chrismation and afterwards we have the second Baptism. The second Baptism may be the monk's repentance in order to reach illumination, which he did not find at Baptism. Or it may be the Mystery of Confession that is sometimes accompanied by Chrismation, when those concerned have denied Christ.

It is in this context that one sees how far the so-called hesychastic tradition is concentrated in the Mysteries of the Church. There is no mysticism in the Orthodox Church which is not in the Mysteries of the Church. No such thing exists.

In Orthodox theology we do not speak about mysticism. We speak about mystical theology and initiation into the mysteries. There is initiation into the mysteries. Initiation into the mysteries passes through the stages of purification, illumination and glorification. We speak of initiation by the Holy Spirit, the instruction that leads man to glorification. The purpose of all this theoria is glorification."

b) The Mystery of Baptism

The Mystery of Baptism is the 'introductory Mystery' by which someone enters the Church. Christ Himself commanded His Disciples to baptise all those who believed in Him.

"And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.' Amen" (Matt. 28:18-20).

The Apostle Paul links the Mystery of Baptism with the death and Resurrection of Christ. Through Baptism the Christian dies with regard to sin and lives a resurrected life according to Christ.

"Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 6:3-11).

Of course Baptism, together with all the Mysteries of the Church, is not simply a formal rite but a Mystery in the highest sense, through which man shares in the uncreated grace of God. This presupposes, however, personal participation on man's part. God acts and man collaborates. Before Baptism there is instruction in the faith, and this is not simply teaching but a journey of spiritual regeneration. Before Baptism catechism took place, which was linked with exorcisms that dismissed the devil and demonic powers (energies) from the candidate's heart. Canon 7 of the Second Ecumenical Council refers to this:

"On the first day we make them Christians; on the second, catechumens; then on the third day, we exorcise them, breathing thrice into their face and ears; and thus we catechise them, and make them

spend much time in the Church, and listen to the Scriptures, and then we baptise them."

Catechism prior to Baptism took place within this framework.

"When we are baptised, if we read the services prior to Baptism carefully, we have purification, from the time of the early Church until some time ago. There are exorcisms before Baptism. We read exorcisms to the candidates for Baptism all through Great Lent. We do not read exorcisms only on the day of Baptism. We read many exorcisms many times over. For what reason? Because the whole struggle was to release the candidate for Baptism from the energies of the devil. This is the main concern of purification.

Now, however, let us consider the state of faith in a period when we prepare candidates with moral teaching. You must be good children. Don't do this, don't do that... As long as they limit their evil deeds, they abstain from evil deeds. When they reach the point of abstaining from evil deeds they are catechised and their mind is filled with knowledge of the Old and New Testaments, the Creed and so on. They sit examinations, pass them and are baptised. This is Baptism.

And we think that someone has become the temple of God because he has been baptised. We say, 'You have been anointed, baptised and washed clean.' He is baptised and the prayers say that he is the temple of God. Why? Because he has been anointed. Yes, the services say all this and we accept what the services say, and believe today that, as someone has become moral and has been instructed in the faith, and as he has been baptised and anointed, he is now the temple of God. Yes, but in the era of the Fathers someone who had constant remembrance of God within his nous was the temple of God. This means that catechism was something more than simply formal instruction. It was something over and above that. Illumination is not catechism. Illumination has nothing to do with catechism. Catechism is something that we could say the candidate learns intellectually."

It is not someone who has simply been baptised who is the temple of God, but the one who has the grace of God active within him. That

is why catechism – which is a whole praxis of the Church – preceded Baptism.

"What is meant by the temple of God? Not someone who is baptised. St Basil the Great does not tell us that every baptised Christian is the temple of God. That's what we say nowadays. We teach that now at university. All the priests say that now someone has been baptised he is the temple of God. All of us who are baptised have God within us.

I have delivered many such sermons myself, that 'We are temples of God', 'You are temples of God' and so on. We do this in order to construct those fine sermons saying that we cannot do what we like with our bodies, we have to be careful, because we are temples of God. We ought not to do this, that or the other. We deliver sermons taking it for granted that as we are baptised we are temples of God.

Yes, but if you look closely at the patristic texts you will see that someone who has received the visitation of the Holy Spirit is the temple of God. Then we understand why St Basil the Great and St Gregory the Theologian postponed Baptism and were baptised late. You know, our professors in America say that it is good for someone to defer Baptism, because then he can sin and do whatever he likes. When he is baptised all his sins are washed away; once he has tired himself out he is baptised and becomes a good Christian and is out of danger.

I have a suspicion, a slight suspicion, because purification was difficult and they had to go through purification, which was not simply catechism and moral instruction, that it was not for moral reasons that they were not baptised, but it was because they had not passed through the exercise of purification of the nous, by which all thoughts depart and one thought remains, the constant remembrance of God. Catechism and exorcisms were also accompanied by ascetic practice. In order for someone to be baptised he had to go through asceticism, not just moral correction of his life. The preparation for Baptism is not moral correction. The preparation for Baptism is asceticism.

That is also the reason why we have that strange parallelism, that the service of monastic profession is called a second baptism and

there is a repetition of the renunciation of Satan. What is supposed to have happened at Baptism is repeated in the service of monastic profession. Why is it done again? Because at Baptism it took place without purification. Now in monastic profession it takes place with purification. What did not happen at Baptism happens now in monastic profession."

Catechism actually aimed at separating the noetic faculty from the rational faculty.

"The paradox of Orthodox asceticism is that when someone practises asceticism in order to be baptised, or – now that we have infant Baptism, the predominance of which has led to a particular state within the Church – when someone practises asceticism in order to reach the state of illumination as the Fathers understand this illumination, he has to practise asceticism in such a way as to separate the noetic faculty from the rational faculty. The rational faculty is engaged in prayer, but it cannot always we engaged in prayer. Is that not so?"

What does not take place now with the introduction of infant Baptism comes about at monastic profession, which is described as a second baptism. Essentially it is repentance that activates the grace of Baptism and Chrismation.

"In Orthodoxy this visitation of the Holy Spirit is called a second baptism: it is monastic profession. What did not happen at Baptism, in the rite of Baptism, is assumed to happen at monastic baptism, and is called a second baptism. What took place at Baptism, when the individual was a baby, is repeated at monastic profession. Although it was not put into practice then, monasticism comes to do what was not done at Baptism. That is monastic profession.

Now we need to discover something else. Why is it that this does not always happen in monasticism, but sometimes it is a routine ceremony? This is not something that can be laid down, at least in terms of ritual."

The liturgical practice of the Church was also defined from this theological perspective.

"Faith must be changed into knowledge, and this comes about after Baptism. In the Church, as we know, there were lessons prior to Baptism based on the Old Testament, based on the Gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke. After Baptism the Church interpreted the fourth Gospel, the Gospel of John. That is why we begin on Easter Sunday: *'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God'* (John 1:1) and we read the Gospel of John up until Pentecost. From then on there was catechism on the Gospel of John.

This was regarded as the Gospel about the Mysteries of the Church and dogma. Before Baptism it was forbidden for anyone to talk to the catechumens about the Mysteries of the Church. Only in Holy Week did the catechumens begin to learn something about the Mysteries of the Church. Instruction in the Mysteries and dogmas was completed after Baptism.

That is why we have the catechetical arrangement of the readings of the Church, based on this ancient classification of the books of the New Testament and the Old Testament."

In the early Church one passed through the stage of purification during catechism and then Baptism followed. Baptism took place on these preconditions. When, however, infant Baptism was introduced, the Church paid great attention to the Christian parents and the Christian godparents, who were to catechise the baptised child when it was older. That is why the godparent recites the Creed and says the words 'I have renounced' on behalf of the infant.

"As someone has passed purification, we baptise him. But infant Baptism is another matter. It is assumed in that case that the godparent is illuminated, together with the parents.

Now, however, we have another problem. We go to the Church for a Baptism. I don't know what happens in Greece, but in America Mrs Fofo arrives in a backless dress, with make-up and dyed hair – there she sits, a glamorous woman, the godmother – and the Priest says, 'Do you renounce Satan?' and she answers, 'I renounce...!' Later on he reaches the question, 'Have you renounced...?' Between 'I renounce' and 'I have renounced' is he expecting a miracle? Now, she has said, 'I renounce', and says it in such a way that even the

priest could drop to the floor. 'I renounce...I have renounced!' Afterwards, she's the godparent!"

When catechism is given beforehand, together with the whole process of purification, the one being baptised experiences the first Resurrection.

"Through Baptism we participate in the first Resurrection, and Baptism is the first Resurrection according to patristic theology. There is purification, then one is baptised and anointed and becomes the Body of Christ. The fact that one becomes the Body of Christ and shares in the Body of Christ, the Church, is the first Resurrection. This is the Resurrection."

With these Orthodox presuppositions and Chrismation that followed, one became a temple of the Holy Spirit.

c) The Mystery of Chrismation

In the contemporary liturgical practice of the Church, the Mystery of Baptism is closely connected with the Mystery of Chrismation and both take place at the same service. However, these are two different Mysteries of the Church.

The Mystery of Baptism takes place with the threefold immersion of the candidate in the water and the declamation of the name of the Triune God. Chrismation is accomplished through anointing with Holy Chrism with the words 'The seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit'. In the early Church, Baptism was the completion of someone's purification and his entry into the Body of Christ, and Chrismation was confirmation that he had an illuminated nous and was the temple of the Holy Spirit.

The *Acts of the Apostles* shows the practice of performing Chrismation by the imposition of the Apostles' hands. Philip was preaching Christ in Samaria and miracles followed his preaching. Unclean spirits departed *"crying with a loud voice"* from many who were possessed. All who believed in the Apostle Philip's preaching *"concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptised"* (Acts 8:5-12). Later on Peter and John were sent, *"who,*

when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14-17).

This passage clearly shows the distinction between the Mystery of Baptism and the Mystery of Chrismation. Through Holy Baptism one receives the message of the glory and rule (*vasileia*) of God, after the demons have departed and one's heart has been cleansed. Holy Chrismation sets the seal on the presence of the Holy Spirit within the Christian.

> "Personally, I have a suspicion that in the early Church Chrismation took place when somebody received the visitation of the Holy Spirit, as happens in monasticism. One goes through purification and then awaits the visitation of the Holy Spirit, which means that the Holy Spirit comes to the man and from then on the Spirit Himself prays within him, inside his heart."

Anyone who reads the prayers of the services of Baptism and Chrismation carefully sees how the grace of God acts through these two Mysteries. The Mystery of Chrismation was "for those who had received the visitation of the Holy Spirit in their heart and were illuminated".

> "It seems that in the early Church the Mystery of Chrismation was not performed together with the Mystery of Baptism. The Mystery of Baptism was performed 'for the remission of sins', whereas the Mystery of Chrismation was intended for those who had already become members of the Body of Christ, because it was assumed that the Holy Spirit had already come to them and was praying in their heart. In other words, they were called by God.
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> The Mystery of Chrismation was performed as a confirmation of this fact. This is why, in the rite of this Mystery, the Priest proclaimed, 'The seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit', when he was anointing the Christian. This seal then was the confirmation by the Church that that Christian, who had just been chrismated, was in the state of illumination. For that reason in the Latin tradition Chrismation is called *confirmatio* - confirmation. It was confirmation that that Christian, having passed through purification, had reached

the state of illumination. At that point the Church comes and gives him the seal, and from then on he is regarded as a member of the Body of Christ.

Thus in the early Church someone who was baptised was only considered a member of the Church when he was chrismated. At Baptism he received the remission of sins and at Chrismation he became a member of the Church. Today Chrismation is performed on infants immediately after Baptism."

"I have certainly not finished my research on this, but it is tending in that direction, because otherwise the term is meaningless."

The teaching of the Apostle Paul that Christians are the temple of the Holy Spirit is important.

"Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are" (1 Cor. 3:16-17).

Elsewhere he says: *"Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit Who is in you, Whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's"* (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

"In the early Church, when they said *'temple of the Holy Spirit'* they did not simply mean someone who had been baptised, who had received Baptism, in the way that we baptise small children now, and say that this child has become a temple of the Holy Spirit as it has been baptised. In patristic terminology the temple of the Holy Spirit is the nous that has the Holy Spirit praying within it, irrespective of rational worship."

The proof that someone is the temple of the Holy Spirit is when he has noetic prayer within him. And this came about through Baptism and Chrismation.

"When the Fathers refer to the temple of the Holy Spirit, they literally mean the temple of the Holy Spirit: a nous and heart in which the Spirit Himself prays. That is why someone is a temple of the Spirit, not because he has been baptised with water. This is what makes him a temple of the Holy Spirit. Participation in the Church

in the state of illumination is, therefore, an experience that can be verified and diagnosed. A spiritual father knows that someone is in this state, and the individual who is in this state is well aware that he is in this state.

There is no vague sort of conception about participating in the Mysteries of the Church."

"When we say that we have the Spirit within us, it means that He is praying within us. Because all have the Spirit within them, but not all are temples of the Holy Spirit. Someone who has the Spirit praying in him is a temple of the Holy Spirit. That is the difference. So those who think they are temples of the Holy Spirit simply because they have been baptised are very far from the reality."

"Noetic prayer is a gift from God and is proof that somebody has become a temple of the Holy Spirit. Nowadays, when professors of New Testament theology interpret the Apostle Paul they say that anyone who has gone through Baptism is a temple of the Holy Spirit. Provided we were baptised as small children, we are automatically a temple of the Holy Spirit. Because we are baptised. In the patristic tradition, however, someone is a temple of the Holy Spirit when he has the Spirit within him praying without ceasing day and night, even when he is asleep. Then he is a temple of the Holy Spirit.

It would be good, out of curiosity, if you were to take the chapter 'Concerning Saints and their Relics' in *An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith* by St John of Damascus and see there why these people's remains are holy relics and why they are saints. The answer is that they were temples of the Holy Spirit.

If this interpretation is put together with the current interpretation of professors of New Testament theology, then we are all saints, because we are baptised. And our professors tell us that we are the temple of the Holy Spirit, because we have been baptised and because we take Holy Communion sometimes."

Because this was the spiritual life of the first Christians and they had the Holy Spirit within them and were temples of the Holy Spirit, they did not use many icons in worship.

"There were not many icons in the early Church. There were not many liturgical aids, long services and so on. Why not? They were

unnecessary. Why were they unnecessary? Because every baptised Christian went through the 'newly illuminated' stage in order to enter the stage of illumination. Who? Every Christian: all the Christians, all the clergy were in the state of illumination.

When somebody is in this state of illumination, does he need an icon to remember Christ? Does he need Holy Scripture? As he has constant remembrance of God, of Christ, within his heart and his nous prays without ceasing whatever he is doing, twenty-four hours a day, every week, every day of the week, and every week of the year, he does not need many external aids. So they did not exist in the early Church."

Noetic prayer bears witness to the gift of Chrismation. Then the Holy Spirit speaks in man's heart; this is what was called 'speaking in tongues' in the early Church. Today the gift of speaking in tongues is expressed by the cry of the Holy Spirit within man's heart.

"In the early Church someone was regarded as a member of the Church if the Holy Spirit had come and dwelt in him. The proof that the Holy Spirit was dwelling in him was that he spoke in tongues – that the Holy Spirit spoke within him and prayed within him. That was Chrismation."

This visit of the Holy Spirit to man's heart makes him *'a royal priesthood'*, according to the affirmation and testimony of the Apostle Peter: *"You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ"* (1 Pet. 2:5).

"The *'royal priesthood'* was the clergy of the Church, all who were temples of the Holy Spirit. For that reason, if you take the service of Chrismation or the service 'To make Chrism', which the bishops perform, it clearly says that Chrismation is 'that you may be His own special people, a royal priesthood'. Those who will be chrismated will be a chosen people, a royal priesthood, and Chrismation is ordination to the clergy of the Church, which includes all the faithful. They have the same priesthood.

Of course this is not the same thing as the bishops and so on in the Church, who celebrate the Liturgy and perform the Mysteries.

> These are two different things, because the *'royal priesthood'* includes women as well as men. All are included. But in order to be members of this Church and to belong to the clergy, they must be temples of the Holy Spirit. If one is not a temple of the Holy Spirit it means that one has lost the gift of Chrismation."

All Christians who have the Holy Spirit within then belong to the *'royal priesthood'*. They have spiritual priesthood. The clergy, however, have sacramental priesthood, as we shall see below.

d) The Mystery of the Divine Liturgy

The Divine Liturgy is at the centre of ecclesiastical life. The incarnation of the Son and Word of God came about in order that human nature might be glorified and Christ might be offered to humankind, so that they could take communion of His Body and Blood. This is the ultimate aim of the Mysteries (Sacraments). The purpose of all the Mysteries is participation in Christ's Body and Blood. Christ said, *"Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you"* (John 6:53). We are baptised and chrismated in order that we may take Holy Communion as members of the Church and members of the Body of Christ.

> "It is clear from the basic principles of the baptismal services, the prayers in the Liturgy and the Canons of the Church, that being a member of the Body of Christ means not only sharing in the common prayers of the Church, but also taking Holy Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ. Any sort of distinction between prayer and Holy Communion is inconceivable, because the whole body of the local Church prays 'with one mouth and one heart', the whole Church says 'Amen' at the end of the Eucharistic prayer, and the whole body of the Church is called by Christ to Holy Communion."

Once a baby has been born and left its mother's womb, it must be fed in order to live, because otherwise it will die. As soon as a Christian leaves the spiritual womb of the Church, which is the sacred font, and it has been confirmed through Chrismation that he is a member of

the Body of Christ and of the Church, he ought to take Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ.

> "Man does not have his own life. He can only have life if he dies with regard to the elements of this world and lives the life of love in the Eucharistic life of the community. His salvation cannot come from a moralising, individualistic piety. It is accomplished only through grace, according to how much he struggles against the devil and empties himself in the life of Christ, Whose Body is made up of real human beings, the Church."

Holy Communion in the Body and Blood of Christ, however, is not without preconditions. Clear preconditions must be met in order for Holy Communion to act unto life and not death.

As human beings have a rational faculty and a noetic faculty, there is rational worship and noetic worship. Rational worship takes place using words, whereas noetic worship is performed inwardly through prayer in the heart. The Divine Liturgy is rational worship, but within it noetic worship is also offered by the one who has developed his noetic faculty. For that reason, someone who also offers noetic worship participates in the Divine Liturgy in the best possible way.

> "That is why we say in the Liturgy, 'Again we offer unto Thee this reasonable worship'. We offer rational worship to God and God gives us noetic worship. This is a gift of God to man. When we have this visitation of the Holy Spirit, it is proof that we are the temple of the Holy Spirit."

Those who take part in the Divine Liturgy benefit according to their spiritual state.

> "The Divine Liturgy is rational worship. But rational worship is of no benefit to someone who does not have noetic worship as well. Human beings are not only rational; they also have noetic energy. They ought not to pray only with the rational faculty; they should also have the prayer of the Holy Spirit within their heart, which is prayer without ceasing. According to the Fathers of the Church, those who are in this state are members of the Church."

We know that God's uncreated energy is "indivisibly divided among divided beings, and multiplied among many without becoming many".

After the incarnation of Christ, in which the divine nature was united inseparably, immutably, indivisibly and unconfusedly with the human nature, Christ's human nature too became a source of God's uncreated energy.

> "The way in which God appears and reveals Himself to man is also through the human nature of Christ, which is now itself divided indivisibly among divided beings and multiplied among many without becoming many."

This is what the Priest says when he cuts up the Holy Bread into many particles: "Divided and distributed is the Lamb of God, being broken yet not divided, being ever eaten yet never consumed, but sanctifying those who partake."

> "When we partake of the Body and Blood of Christ we do not receive only a fragment of Christ within us, but everyone who takes Holy Communion receives the whole Christ within him. However, this does not mean that there are many Christs. Christ is one, and this Christ, Who is one, is wholly present in every believer who has partaken of the Most Pure Mysteries. On the holy Paten where the Lamb is cut into pieces by the Priest, Christ is not fragmented, but multiplied into many without becoming many. The whole Christ is in every particle of the Holy Bread. This is the Mystery of God's presence in man."

Earlier we mentioned that there are appropriate preconditions for participation in Holy Communion. This is a very important subject. The Apostle Paul, speaking about the Mystery of Holy Communion, lays down the essential preconditions for approaching it.

"Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep (1 Cor. 11:27-30).

This examination is not a moral test. The Christian examines whether he is a real member of the Church, to what extent he is a temple of the

Holy Spirit or, at very least, if he is in the state of purification and in that perspective. Because Christ is the purification of those being purified, the illumination of those being illumined and the glorification of those being glorified. Thus Christ also becomes the Hell of the impure, as He will be at the Second Coming. Then the same Christ will be Light for the righteous and fire for the unrepentant, as we shall see in the next chapter.

In the early Church, ascertaining whether it was possible for a Christian to take Holy Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ was not a matter of ascertaining whether his life was moral, but whether he was in the state of illumination.

> "This was always the case with us. According to the Fathers, the one who takes Holy Communion is in the state of illumination. When it was ascertained that he was not in the state of illumination, he did not take Holy Communion. This was the criterion. In the phrase 'those who communicate worthily', they did not mean by 'worthily' those who avoided sin and were morally correct, but those who were in the state of illumination and so took Holy Communion. Of course this had moral foundations, but it was not identified with morals."

Someone takes Holy Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ when he belongs to the Church, which is the Body of Christ. He communicates as a member of the Church, as a member of the Body of Christ. But the Christian must be clearly aware of being a member of the Body of Christ.

> "It is the Body of Christ that comes into being through the descent of the Holy Spirit. The experience of theoria is also an experience of the human nature of Christ within man. For that reason the Fathers emphasise that anyone who does not sense Christ within him, does not have Christ within him. It is not a matter merely of saying that we are the Body of Christ. One must be aware of being a member of the Body of Christ. Someone who senses that he lacks this awareness, does not have it. The one who senses that he has this awareness within him, has the proof within him.
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> One of the greatest difficulties that exist in Orthodoxy today is the movement of Makrakis and the members of *Zoe*. They have de-

stroyed this concept. According to the Fathers of the Church, in the early Church they took Holy Communion every Sunday. And the Canons of the Church presuppose that Christians will naturally take Holy Communion every Sunday. Yes, but only until it was proved that someone had lapsed from the state of illumination. After falling from illumination, he was excluded from Holy Communion, because Holy Communion is for the illuminated. He lapses from illumination and no longer takes Holy Communion.

This was the reason why the Fathers constructed the Sanctuary with curtains and so on. The majority of the faithful were no longer in the state of illumination, as were most monks and some pious people in the villages, so that the ceremonies could take place as they do in monasteries today. That is why even monks sometimes abstain from taking Holy Communion and communicate at intervals, according to their spiritual state.

To be sure, if one is in the state of illumination and theoria, one can take Holy Communion every week. Someone who is not in this state does not communicate. However, the spiritual father knew if his spiritual child was in the state of illumination.

Then the clever people of today came along. They read the Canons of the Church and said that we ought to take Holy Communion every Sunday. The Canons do not say that we should communicate every Sunday. They mean that the illuminated should communicate every Sunday. And now Holy Communion has been reduced to a sort of magic, particularly among the pious. We go there and take Holy Communion...

The very ones who did this and talked about frequent Holy Communion, went and abolished monasticism for us. They told the children, 'Don't go to monasteries.' They made out that all monks were illiterate. Only now, in the last few years, have they begun to wake up a bit."

In any case, Holy Communion acts in accordance with the spiritual state of the communicant. It purifies those being purified, illumines those being illuminated and glorifies those being glorified, just as it burns up those not undergoing purification.

"In Holy Communion we partake of the Body and Blood of

Christ. Provided we are in the state of illumination, this is beneficial to us. If we are not in the state of illumination this Holy Communion does not help us. This is what we mean by 'worthily'. Someone who approaches worthily derives benefit. When someone approaches unworthily, he derives no benefit, but rather sleeps, because he remains dead and not alive in Christ. This Holy Communion in the Body and Blood of Christ in experience is not just a reality, but even becomes visible. This is the purpose of the Divine Eucharist: the glorification of the faithful. Read the prayers of preparation for Holy Communion and you will clearly see the aim of the Divine Eucharist.

Recently a bishop asserted, somewhere where I was present, that we are all glorified, as we read in the prayer of preparation for Holy Communion that it 'glorifies and nourishes me'. Well, this is a prayer by Symeon the New Theologian and refers to his personal experience, not to the experience of every Orthodox Christian who takes Holy Communion today. This is Symeon the New Theologian's prayer. Consequently, when we pray in this way, we say it 'glorifies and nourishes me', but this does not mean that it 'glorifies and nourishes me', because only those who communicate worthily are glorified and nourished in the manner of Symeon the New Theologian."

Unfortunately the Mystery of the Divine Eucharist has become secularised. Christians take Holy Communion unconditionally, or at best they prepare with fasting and a formal confession.

"Today things have reached such a state that not even the priest ought to take Holy Communion. If you read what St Basil the Great says about the preparation of the clergy for the Liturgy, it is clear that St Basil lays down that at least the clergy ought to be in the state of illumination in order to celebrate the Divine Liturgy."

As things have changed and the true Orthodox preconditions have been altered, the Church has set some limits. It laid down holy Canons that define how one should partake of Holy Communion, it prescribed the Mystery of Holy Confession, which determines the basic degree of repentance, and it made some adjustments to the church building and to the way the prayers were read. In the early Church the whole church building was one unit and the prayers were read out loud. Because,

however, the classifications of catechumens, those being baptised, the faithful and the glorified were abolished, certain outward divisions were put in place.

"That is why the iconostasis developed. Originally there was no iconostasis, because the nave of the church was only for the illuminated. The icon screen was the entrance to the nave. It was not a wooden screen as it is today. For that reason, in monasteries on the Holy Mountain, in Kalambaka and Meteora, the entrance to the nave is an iconostasis painted with icons. The iconostasis was on the walls at the entrance to the nave, and the Sanctuary was an open area. At most it had railings on which they put an icon of Christ and one of the Holy Virgin.

Originally this was the iconostasis. Afterwards the other iconostasis was made higher and the Liturgy was arranged in such a way that, because the unilluminated were allowed to attend the Liturgy, they limited when they could receive Holy Communion. Those who were not illuminated communicated during particular fasts in the course of the year. It was assumed that at Baptism they had received illumination through Chrismation, but due to the life they were leading they did not possess an illuminated nous, so they did not take Holy Communion.

The clergy celebrated the Liturgy behind the curtain, hidden now from the people, because those who were not in the state of illumination ought not to see the Mysteries. For the same reason they did not take part in the prayers, and the prayers began to be said secretly. Because these prayers are for the illuminated; they are not for everybody."

One of the basic tasks of bishops and priests is to train Christians to pass from purification to illumination and glorification, so that they can partake of the Body and Blood of Christ, and Holy Communion may act as purification, illumination and glorification. The faithful ought to live noetic worship so that they also take part worthily in rational worship. This is the work of spiritual fathers.

"I do not mean the spiritual fathers in modern parishes, to whom people go to receive social and family advice, and at the end the spiritual father reads them a prayer of forgiveness and they go away

content that they have been forgiven, and can go and take Holy Communion, without either the priest or the penitent having the slightest idea about noetic prayer. In the early Church it was perceptible that someone was in a state of illumination and someone else was not. One took Holy Communion and the other did not. It was perceptible in the early Church. Now these things are imperceptible. Everyone feels a certain comfort from confession and Holy Communion, nothing more."

In the past in the Church it was the bishop who was the spiritual father par excellence and prepared the faithful for Holy Communion. He also trained the priests to become good spiritual fathers. The same happened as with human knowledge.

"The professor of astronomy teaches the doctoral candidates to become as good as he is. Why? So that he can leave successors and the tradition of astronomy will continue. Because if this teaching and preparation of doctoral candidates and prospective professors to succeed today's astronomers ceases, astronomy will disappear as a science."

This used to happen in the Church as well, with regard to the therapeutic method for preparing Christians for Holy Communion. Thus in the teaching of St Symeon the New Theologian teaching and catechism are very closely linked with confession and repentance, which was the work of the bishop, in accordance with the example of the astronomer that we have referred to.

"Exactly the same used to take place in the Church. The bishop is the university professor who teaches doctoral candidates. Who are these candidates? They are the monks, who will succeed the bishop. Why will they succeed the bishop? Not because they are monks in the modern sense of the word, but because they are the ones who learn how to remember God at all times, how the nous is purified, how to reach illumination, and how to reach glorification. For that reason the bishop is the teacher of monks.

Later on we arrived at the era described by Symeon the New Theologian, who was in conflict and in dispute with many people in his time because monks were becoming teachers. Whereas before

only the bishop taught, now monks also began to teach. So what argument did the bishops use? That only bishops should teach and monks are not teachers.

Note this point very carefully. The bishop is the teacher, the monk is the pupil. Monks cannot act as teachers. What is the issue? If you look carefully, the dispute is about the Mystery of Confession, the Sacrament of Repentance: whether monks are permitted to hear confessions. In the early Church the bishop was the one who heard confessions. Later, however, it became customary for the bishop to give priests permission to hear confessions. But here we also have monks who hear confessions. The dispute alternates: sometimes it refers to confession, sometimes to teaching.

If you read carefully, Symeon the New Theologian identifies teaching with confession, with the Mystery of Repentance. Why does he regard these two things as the same? Because in the early Church the bishop's task was to teach people how to pass through the stage of purification and reach illumination. Priests who were spiritual fathers did this in the parishes under the bishop's supervision. In those days there were not just a handful of catechumens: there were hundreds of them. There was a complete education system within the Church. There were hundreds of catechumens every year and usually they baptised them on Holy Saturday.

To ensure that catechetical instruction was organised correctly, the priest, under the guidance of the bishop, undertook the teaching of the newly-baptised, those preparing for Baptism and certain catechumens, and then the deacons taught the rest of the catechumens. St Dionysios the Areopagite describes this in great detail. If you want to see the practice of the early Church, read *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* by Dionysios the Areopagite. It is all in there.

The bishop was regarded as the teacher of monks. Why? Because in those days someone went through the state of purification, reached illumination and he had a strong character. Then the bishop took on the newly-baptised Christian and taught him last of all. Why? So as to bring him to perfection and make him a 'doctor of theology'. What does being a 'doctor of theology' mean? It means constant remembrance of God and noetic prayer, which had for the

most part become restricted to monastic circles, as monks were prepared in this way. Subsequently the bishops of the Church were chosen from the order of monks – not always, but we could say in most cases."

As time passed this tradition was lost, with the result that monks would also teach. They did not perform the Mystery of Confession, but they gave instruction and catechism. In other words, they helped the faithful to free themselves from thoughts, so that the noetic faculty would be separated from the rational faculty and noetic prayer would begin. Thus we understand what teaching and repentance mean, and how they relate to Holy Communion.

"If we take the writings of Symeon the New Theologian, what does he have in mind when he talks about teaching? Who teaches? He explains why monks had also become teachers, whereas in earlier times monks were not permitted to teach. Monks are pupils, say the early Fathers, and bishops are teachers. He explains why monks had become teachers in his day, and what teaching is. He means confessions and remission of sins.

When Symeon the New Theologian speaks about teaching and why monks have the duty to teach, he means the duty to hear confessions. Confession is the Church's teaching in the highest sense, because teaching about purification and how to reach illumination took place in the Mystery of Confession

Nowadays when we say 'teacher' it has nothing at all to do with confession. Nowadays teachers are catechists, university professors, high school teachers and so on, but when they teach they teach man's rational faculty, they no longer train his nous. So teaching has no connection with spiritual guidance – the connection is only indirect these days. Monks became teachers or spiritual fathers, because in the era of Symeon the New Theologian the bishops did not do their duty in this respect."

It is from this point of view that we ought to look at the sermon in the Divine Liturgy, which refers to **how** we can acquire a relationship with God, **how** we can experience glorification, **how** we can acquire love. The fact that sermons in Church today make little mention of

'**how**' but speak about '**what**' shows that they are not in accord with the perspective of the Divine Eucharist. They are neither eucharistic nor ecclesiastical, because they do not presuppose hesychasm.

> "This is where the greatest problem of Christianity lies today. We hear fine sermons from the pulpit. All the priests who preach speak about love, about one thing or another.
>
> I have written a whole book called *The Ancestral Sin* and when I wrote it I had no idea how one attains to this unselfish love. There I described it, so to speak, analytically, but what is the method for achieving it? We sit and talk about unselfish love. But who can become unselfish? And who has reached unselfishness? Who has attained to love? When we sit there and say that we possess love, what are we? Do we really have love or are we pretending that we have it? That is the problem.
>
> The sermons are excellent. They fill the pulpit and are a good thing. Christians sit there listening enthusiastically to these sermons. But although we hear sermons, I for one have not heard '**how**'. I have heard '**what**' and '**where**'. Usually the '**how**' is 'Don't do this, don't do that, don't do the other. This is a sin, that is a sin. Do this; do good works.' All very well, but one can do good works and in the end go to Hell instead of going to Paradise."

In the early Church, instead of giving individual sermons, they read the homilies of the Fathers.

> "Among the Fathers of the Church, one only needs to read Chrysostom's sermons to see how highly developed the sense of social justice was in Chrysostom, who is one of the great Fathers of the Church. His works were read for centuries by all the Orthodox.
>
> In the past the good custom existed that, instead of listening to the priest expounding the Gospel every Sunday in those pietistic sermons, they used to read patristic sermons on each Gospel."

In the final analysis, the whole Orthodox liturgical tradition and all the other Mysteries and services concern the members of the Church, and their aim is participation in the Mystery of the Divine Eucharist, so that Christ may become purification, illumination and glorification.

There is no other purpose. There are no private Mysteries. It is impossible to separate all the other rites of the Church from Holy Communion in the Body and Blood of Christ. And none of these things can be separated from the real mystery, which is purification, illumination and glorification. There is obvious unity between dogma, prayer, the Mysteries, asceticism and the Divine Eucharist. Ecclesiastical life revolves around these axes.

e) Clergy, Monks and Laity

The catechumens in the early Church were prepared to receive Baptism and Chrismation and to become faithful, honourable members of the Church of Christ, temples of the Holy Spirit. The Church, as has already been mentioned, is the real Body of Christ within which man is saved and glorified. In the apostolic era, the Apostles, who had received the Holy Spirit, directed and led the local Churches, as can be seen in the Epistles.

With the passage of time, however, the clergy also needed to evolve, with the three degrees of priests, deacons and bishops, to carry out the work of the Church, which is the salvation of human beings and participation in the purifying, illuminating and glorifying energy of God. Particular categories of Christians with different spiritual gifts and ministries developed within the Church. The Apostle Paul refers in his Epistle to the Corinthians to these gifts and lists them in hierarchical order.

At the beginning he writes: *"Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually"* and he continues: *"God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But earnestly desire the best gifts"* (1 Cor. 12:27-31).

Subsequently two 'orders' of members took shape in the Church: the faithful laity and the clergy. Later monks were added as well.

Laity and Clergy

Through the Mysteries of Baptism and Chrismation, and also through their struggle to practise God's commandments, the faithful had some sort of spiritual gift, at least prayer of the nous in the heart, and they belonged to the *"royal priesthood"*. The Apostle Paul, in the list of gifts that we saw in the passage quoted above, puts the gift of tongues – *"varieties of tongues"* – which is noetic prayer, in last place. It is clear from other Epistles of the Apostles that all the members of the Church had noetic prayer, which is a sign that someone is a temple of the Holy Spirit and loves God.

Thus all the faithful, including the women, had spiritual priesthood. They were members of the *"royal priesthood"* and were illuminated, unless one of them fell into sin, in which case he lost prayer and was numbered among the catechumens as a penitent. The faithful were obviously not people who had no spiritual gifts, but those who had at least noetic prayer.

The Apostle Paul refers to people who prayed with their nous – *"I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the understanding"* – but also to the 'uninformed', who do not have this noetic prayer. *"Otherwise, if you bless with the spirit, how will he who occupies the place of the uninformed say 'Amen' at your giving of thanks"* (1 Cor. 14:15-16). Further on he writes, *"Therefore if the whole church comes together in one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those who are uninformed or unbelievers, will they not say that you are out of your mind?"* (1 Cor. 14:23). It is obvious that in the first Church, according to St Paul's description, there were people with spiritual gifts, with a hierarchy of gifts, and uninformed laypeople. Outside the Church there were unbelievers.

> "Within this context, however, we see a curious development in the history of the Church, according to which the royal priesthood of the Church did not retain its original quality. In the beginning, in the era of the first Christians, we have the laity and the clergy. The Apostle Paul calls laypeople 'the uninformed' and the Fathers of the Church interpret St Paul's 'uninformed' as laypeople. The layman is someone who has been baptised but has not yet been called 'from

above', so as to become a member of the royal priesthood – that is to say, a member of the clergy.

Someone was regarded as a member of the clergy if he had been called by God and visited by the Holy Spirit in his heart, and the Spirit had begun to pray in him. In other words, someone who had become a temple of the Holy Spirit and therefore a member of the Body of Christ, the Church."

In the early apostolic Church all the faithful had spiritual gifts and belonged to the 'royal priesthood'. They had spiritual priesthood, because they all had, at very least, noetic prayer, which is a spiritual liturgy.

From among these faithful they chose some to make them deacons, priests and bishops, so they would have the special gift of priesthood, by which they would celebrate the Mysteries and direct the members of the Church spiritually.

When the Apostles were about to choose the first deacons and ordain them, they said to the faithful: *"Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business"* (Acts 6:3). The First Martyr Stephen was *"a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit"* (Acts 6:5). In order to be chosen to become deacons, they had to have the Holy Spirit. Having the Holy Spirit means that they had noetic prayer, which is very clear proof of the presence and energy of the Holy Spirit. The members of the Church knew this and recognised such people, apparently through the spiritual gift that they themselves possessed.

In the early Church the clergy, who were organised into degrees of priesthood – deacons, priests and bishops – had a spiritual gift and thus they celebrated the Mysteries. At the same time, however, they guided the faithful to participation in the purifying, illuminating and glorifying energy of God, so that on these preconditions they could partake worthily of the Mysteries. This is the way in which Christians are cured. The degrees of priesthood corresponded to the degrees of the spiritual life.

"Dionysios the Areopagite tells us plainly that the deacon corresponds to the stage of purification, the priest to the stage of illumination and the bishop to the stage of glorification."

This is also clear from the practice of the Church, according to which a newly baptised Christian ought not to become a member of the clergy. We also find this in the commandment that the Apostle Paul gives to the Bishop Timothy: *"A bishop then must...not* [be] *a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil"* (1 Tim. 3:2 and 6).

"We ordain someone when he reaches illumination. That is when we ordain him. Ordination does not make him illuminated. We ordain him because he is illuminated."

"We have universities, high schools and primary schools. To become a bishop or a member of the clergy in the early Church someone could not be only recently baptised. For that reason there is a Canon forbidding the newly baptised to be ordained.

Why does it forbid the ordination of the newly baptised? Because the newly baptised Christian had not yet attained constant remembrance of God. He had only just gone through the stage of purification, and as a newly baptised Christian he was learning about the stage of illumination. Later, with the unceasing remembrance of God, he was regarded as have entered the stage of theoria. This stage of theoria, which is the first step, is the highest level of illumination and the first step towards glorification.

Bishops were chosen from people in this state, which is why the illumined became bishops, not the newly baptised. Being illumined does not mean being a graduate of the University of Athens or the Academies of Russia. It means that someone possessed illumination, constant remembrance of God, noetic prayer and so on. Essentially, he had been purified."

As time passed, however, the Church became secularised. Originally those among the faithful who had prayer were ordained to the clergy. Later, people were ordained whose outward behaviour was good, but as they did not have any spiritual gifts, they did not know how to cure people. They continued, however, to perform the Mysteries.

"The clergy is a group of people who are at least in the state of illumination, according to the teaching of the Fathers. If they are not in the state of illumination, the weaknesses of the clergy have to be made up for. Throughout the centuries, whenever the clergy

in general lapsed from the state of illumination, there was a general decline, not only of the sacerdotal clergy – the priests, deacons and so on. The decline was so widespread that even the bishops were included in it. The bishops fell short of this state of illumination, and had not even passed through the state of purification."

"Bearing this in mind, if one begins to study the clergy in the early Church, those among the Christians who passed through purification and reached illumination or theoria were teachers in their own right, because they had reached a certain spiritual condition.

That is why we have the strange phenomenon that parishes in the early Church had many priests. In the time of Heraclius, St Sophia had eighty priests and one hundred and fifty deacons, and these numbers were after the reduction. There had been many more, but the number was reduced. We only know the number after the reduction, not before. Ordination was a practice in the Church by which the Church certified that someone was suitable to be a priest, as he had reached a certain point and for that reason he was suitable to be a spiritual father. If, however, he had not reached that point, he was not suitable to be a spiritual father, so he could not be ordained a priest or a bishop.

In the early Church, the parish was made up of the illuminated, but not in the sense that they had acquired rational knowledge, because the most enlightened from that point of view is the devil. He is the best theologian outside Paradise."

"In the New Testament, those who reach glorification are called Apostles and Prophets. Bishops were chosen from among them: bishops and priests came from among the glorified, the Prophets. After them there were teachers and all the others in the Church. Prophets were at the head of every parish. In other words, they are the hospital doctors. Among the doctors in the hospital there is one who is the director. After the doctors there are the nursing staff and all the others who make up a hospital.

What happened in the Church was this. The Prophets had the vote, so to speak, to elect bishops, because the Prophets administered the Church. They were not Prophets because they were chosen by the people: they were called by God. That is why we have those

who are called by God. The Fathers of the Church say that in order to become a member of the clergy, someone must be called by God. Being called by God means that the Holy Spirit Himself has come to dwell within the man and prays. Thus the Apostle Paul says: *'God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers...'* (1 Corinthians 12:28). These make up the clinical staff, the doctors, who also choose from among themselves a director of the hospital, who is called a bishop, and they administer the Church."

The Church was regarded as a spiritual hospital and the clergy as spiritual doctors who cure people's spiritual illnesses.

"The clergy of the Church are the clinical staff, the hospital doctors. After them come those who are at the stage of illumination, who are the hospital nursing staff. And after the nursing staff we have those being purified, who are the hospital patients.

Of course, this is not an exact comparison but an approximate one. As time passes, the glorified, the doctors, gradually disappear from a hospital, but the illuminated take their place. And gradually they too disappear and the patients replace them. The patients now direct the hospital.

That is why Symeon the New Theologian says that today men become bishops who in the time of the Apostle Paul would have said 'Amen' as uninformed laypeople. Because in the fourteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, those who say 'Amen', when we say 'Amen' in church, those 'unlearned' people are the laity, according to the Fathers of the Church. And now those who simply said 'Amen', says Symeon the New Theologian, are bishops of the Church. In other words, they have neither glorification nor illumination, yet they have become bishops of the Church.

Question from a Student: And they don't even know about these things?

Reply: They don't even know about them. And if you speak about them, they may even tell you that you are a heretic. Fortunately the Church recognised him as a saint of the Church, so if we say something that St Symeon the New Theologian says, we are in no danger of being condemned as heretics."

The clergy knew the method of diagnosing illness and treating it, as do doctors who treat the body.

"...Someone goes and becomes a doctor once he has learnt to make a diagnosis and to give treatment.

Someone would go through purification in order to reach Baptism. He was baptised, illumined and became a temple of God. And once he had become a temple of God, because he was illumined he would then illumine others.

Ordination does not illuminate the candidate. Ordination presupposes that the candidate is illuminated. It is assumed that the ordination candidate, as he is illuminated, was chosen for ordination because he is already capable of becoming a spiritual father. He does not become a spiritual father because we have said a magical prayer over his head. We did not make him a spiritual father by saying a prayer. Take a priest who is mentally deranged. Read a prayer for him, and he will destroy thousands of people. A priest who does not know how to hear confessions correctly will send people straight to Hell instead of sending them to Paradise.

We recognise a spiritual father because he is in a certain spiritual state, so we ordain him. However, because this tradition became distorted, the other tradition arose, whereby the bishop, who has responsibility and is the spiritual father par excellence, when he has a good priest who knows about these matters, and has confirmation that the priest is in a particular spiritual state, he makes him a spiritual father. He ordains him a spiritual father and he receives a certificate that he is a spiritual father. He can hear confessions and so on. But how does this relate to the subject of diagnosis and treatment, as we see it in the early Church? That is the fundamental problem.

The historical development of our current perceptions of the bishop – the new perception of the bishop that we have is very recent, but in the West there is a long history of the evolution of the episcopal office, which makes comprehensible why the bishop is regarded as an administrator in the West. His title is 'administrator of the Church'. His work is administration.

Today it is usually the parish priest who celebrates the Liturgy –

in the West, and now the same happens here – the bishop goes to church and usually if he is present he presides without celebrating, whereas in the early Church, until the Fall of Constantinople and until the Greek Revolution, the bishop celebrated the Liturgy every Sunday. His work was to celebrate the Liturgy every Sunday, to give instruction, and to supervise, so to speak, all the catechism and all the work of the parish and the Church. Nothing else.

In any case, I see no difference between the patristic conception of Christianity and medical science. I can find no difference. Do you follow me? No difference at all. Provided, of course, that psychiatry is included within medical science. There is something much more basic here than what is known to modern psychiatry.

Consequently, the apostolic succession is part of the apostolic tradition. The different degrees of priesthood exist for the purpose of diagnosis and treatment. So when someone is cured, he really is cured, and the parish recognises that he is cured. For that reason they choose him to be a leader, a bishop or a member of the clergy. They do not make him a member of the clergy in the hope that he will learn to diagnose and cure. They make him a bishop because he has been cured."

The bishop is the guarantor of this therapeutic treatment method.

"It is usually said nowadays that the episcopate guarantees that the Orthodox tradition will be passed on. That is what they usually say today. Of course, this patristic tradition exists, that the tradition is mainly transmitted through the bishops, who are at the centre of the tradition, the centre of the unity of the Church, the centre of the Church's duty to teach. They are central to the liturgical and sacramental life of the Church and nothing can be done without the bishop. This is a fact. But why is it a fact? Is it because they received a laying-on of hands that has come down uninterrupted from the era of the Apostles, or because they had therapeutic grace?

Let us compare it with medical science. Take surgeons, for example. They become surgeons by means of examinations. They take courses. They practise in laboratory examinations, and once the professors consider that they are ready, they give them a certificate and they are called surgeons.

The bishops were the university professors in the early Church. Now the bishops are the pupils of the 'professors'. In the early Church the bishops are the professors. They produce spiritual children. They have all the responsibility for therapeutic treatment within the parish and elsewhere, which is why the bishop gives the priest permission to act as a spiritual father. Ordination does not give the priest permission to be a spiritual father, as some people say, because being a spiritual father does not come from ordination. Ordination is so that the Mysteries may be performed, the public worship of the Church and the Mysteries, in the proper way. The fact that a priest does not become a spiritual father by ordination means that ordination does not bestow everything.

One can only be made a spiritual father by a spiritual father. This is the essence of the apostolic succession and the apostolic tradition. Just as the surgeon-professor produces surgeons, so spiritual fathers produce spiritual fathers. One cannot become a spiritual father by being ordained. This is impossible.

From this point of view, the bishop was the bearer of the tradition. The bishop is assumed to be the spiritual father in the highest sense and the bearer of the diagnostic and therapeutic tradition of the Church. He knows best of all how to diagnose correctly and treat correctly. In this manner the episcopate transmits the apostolic tradition – the heart of which is diagnosis and therapeutic treatment, culminating in glorification – from one generation to the next."

"And they reach the point when Symeon the New Theologian tells us that many bishops in the Church today would have been laypeople, not clergy, in the early Church. This means that the hospital is falling apart, and instead of real doctors, they have been replaced, initially by nursing staff, who at any rate know something. Later, however, their replacements were not even nurses. And we reach the point that the hospital is full of charlatans."

Today things have deteriorated further. The clergy celebrate the Mysteries, but many of them do not know the therapeutic method and cannot cure people in accordance with the Orthodox Tradition. They do not know how, and are unable, to help Christians to pass through purification to illumination and glorification.

"As far as contemporary Orthodox theology is concerned, ecclesiastical practice has been separated into two spheres. On the one hand, we promise therapeutic treatment in the future, after death. We have become physicians not for today but for after death. How do we manage this? We receive ordination and afterwards we begin: 'Blessed is the glory and rule (*vasileia*) of the Father...' We perform the ritual, and then we say that everyone who partakes of the Mysteries will have life after death and will go to Paradise. Anyone who does not partake will go to Hell. Thus we have devoted ourselves to the future cure of man.

The priest himself does not cure anyone; he simply celebrates Liturgies. The bishop does not cure anyone; he simply celebrates Liturgies. Who teaches people nowadays? Who leads people from purification to illumination?

The liturgical life of the Orthodox Church today, not just in Greece but everywhere, no longer has any connection with the therapeutic treatment of man from the point of view of purification and illumination. If you want purification and illumination today, the most you can do is go to a monastery. You even need to be careful about which monastery: you cannot go to just any monastery. This is Orthodoxy today."

"We have become conservers of particular liturgical texts and nothing more. Apart from the future life that we promise everyone: 'Come to church. If you don't come you will go to Hell; if you come you will go to Heaven.' This is the message today. Yes, but how many of those who come to Church are cured, and how many priests today cure people? That is the question.

And there is something else. What about interest in the life to come? Most of those who are suffering from psychosis and are afraid of Hell are expected to go into monasteries and concern themselves with their souls from then on, so as to be sure of a place in Heaven. This is the vocation of monks.

So what will the parish priests do in their parishes, as they do not lead people from purification to illumination? They will concern themselves with this present life. There are parents who want to find a good husband for their daughter, so they offer paraklises

and prayers. They go and bless houses and shops, so that business will go well. They read the blessing service on the occasional ship, so that the shipowner will become richer. They continually read prayers and perform blessings and memorial services. Thus the parish priest follows a ritualistic routine, but he does not involve himself with the purification and illumination of the laity, which is his main concern, at least as it seems from the liturgical books."

"The ritual life of the Church is preserved: fine Liturgies, beautiful vestments, music, icons and one thing and another... but curative treatment - No! That is the problem.

We have reached the point that it is not only rare to find a spiritual father or a priest who is in the state of illumination, but even if you ask them about, say, the teaching concerning the Fathers, or illumination, glorification and purification, they have no idea - not only the clergy, but even university professors."

The success of a diocese depends on whether the bishop and clergy know the therapeutic method, in other words, whether they themselves are following the path to holiness. Otherwise it is a failure.

"If a bishop becomes a saint himself and the clergy become saints and a large part of the flock becomes holy, this amounts to success. If, however, in a diocese neither the bishop nor the clergy nor any member of the Church reaches holiness, as this diocese does not have people who pass through purification and reach illumination and glorification, this means, with regard to strict Orthodox criteria, serious failure."

To be sure, the fact that the clergy do not know the therapeutic method does not mean that they are unnecessary. It has already been stressed that the task of the clergy is twofold: on the one hand they perform the Mysteries and on the other they cure people so that they can participate worthily in the Mysteries. The clergy may not know the Orthodox therapeutic method, but they celebrate the Mysteries canonically, unless they have been officially unfrocked by the Church.

"The priest or the bishop may be the worst man in the world. Provided, however, that there is no ecclesiastical enactment against him and provided that he has not been deprived of clerical orders, all

the Mysteries that he performs as a representative of the hierarchy are valid. The Baptisms are valid and his ordinations are valid, even his prayers for the forgiveness of penitents are valid, though he himself be a rogue. Everything is valid.

From the moment he is deprived of clerical orders, however, everything he does is invalid. The man is the same before and after he is deprived of clerical orders, but being deprived of clerical orders has changed the situation. This is because we have an official decision of the Church that he is now degraded from the clergy.

The same happens with those who are excommunicated. When the Church has not officially excommunicated someone and has not expressed a view and has performed his funeral, this means that his relatives have every right to hold his memorial service in church. If, however, he has been excommunicated, because he was a Mason or a heretic, he will not be given a funeral. Consequently, as he cannot be given a funeral, there is no question of a memorial service."

In general, the priesthood as a gift of grace is very highly valued within the Church. At the same time, all Christians, in order to be living members of the Church, should belong to the *'royal priesthood'*, according to the words of the Apostle Peter: *"But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy"* (1 Pet. 2:9-10). And according to the words of the Apostle Paul to the Colossians: *"Giving thanks to the Father Who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light"* (Col. 1:12).

Monks

In the early Church, as recorded in the Apostle Paul's Epistles, the Christians had the Holy Spirit in action. They were temples of the Holy Spirit. They had the gift of noetic prayer and various gifts of the Holy Spirit. The two Epistles of St Paul to the Corinthians, among others, bear witness to this. The clergy were chosen from this spiritually gifted faithful laity.

However, as time passed, the local Churches and parishes became secularised. This tradition was lost; in the beginning it moved into the deserts and later to the sketes and monasteries. What had been accomplished in parishes in the time of the early Church was now accomplished within monasticism.

"As time passed we reached a point where, instead of the doctors having the vote for the bishop, the nurses and gradually the cooks, cleaners and so on, acquired a vote. In the hospital the Prophets, so to speak, are democratically removed from the hierarchy and from then on they congregate in the deserts and become monks in monasteries. A distinction is made between monasteries and parishes. That is why one of the first names for a monastery is 'hospital'. It became customary for the monastery to be called a hospital instead of a church.

What life did they lead in this hospital? They would say the apostolic life. The apostolic life was preserved in monasteries rather than in parishes. And we see examples of pilgrims who go from the world into the desert and encounter hermits, and the hermit asks if the Church still exists in the world. The meaning of his question is not whether there are bishops, priests and parishioners in the world. He is asking whether speaking in tongues still exists in the world, whether noetic prayer exists in the world, because these are the members of the Church. And the point is reached when the 'uninformed' Christian who says 'Amen' is a layman according to the Fathers of the Church."

"Monasticism, therefore, is not something new in the Church. Monasticism existed in every parish, because every Christian was a monk in the early Church."

With the appearance of monasticism and the formation of monasteries, the Church actually furthers its purpose, which is the sanctification of human beings. Of course, this was also continued in the parishes by those who follow Orthodox teaching. The bishops knew the dogmas and at their consecration they made an affirmation that they would keep them unadulterated. Christians were instructed in the faith by the bishops on the basis of the dogmas, and some who were zealous went to the monasteries "to convert these dogmas into life". Thus the

monasteries became places where people became temples of the Holy Spirit, making the purpose of Baptism and Chrismation a reality.

> "If someone sees monasticism from this point of view, he clearly sees that the monasteries in the Middle Ages and under Turkish domination were nothing other than the continuation of the parish life of the early Church.
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> In the early Church every parish was headed by spiritual fathers who practised this asceticism and were capable of leading the faithful to illumination of the nous and so on. When the parish declined and became lax in this respect, when there were no longer many spiritual fathers to guide the people, from then on the monasteries flourished. Later we have a situation in which the parish and the diocese itself can be a preparatory stage, and the completion of the transformation of dogma into experience was entrusted to the Fathers who gathered round the hermitages and monasteries."

Anyone who entered a monastery was regarded as a catechumen who had to reach illumination and activate the grace that he had received at Baptism and Chrismation. Thus the therapeutic method of Orthodox life was experienced in the monasteries, which were centres of spiritual and ecclesiastical life.

> "When monasticism developed, real therapeutic treatment was transferred to the monasteries and the parishes were left behind. Diagnosis and treatment took place in the monasteries. And the custom prevailed that at least the bishops – the metropolitans, archbishops and patriarchs – would come from the monasteries. Thus we have unmarried metropolitans and so on. The tradition seems mainly to have prevailed among the celibate.
>
> On this point you need to read St Basil the Great carefully. Why does someone depart to the desert? Because celibacy and flight from the world make it easier to acquire constant remembrance of God and so on. They make it easier, because when someone is very busy and is concerned with all sorts of things, he cannot easily dedicate himself. It is very important for the remembrance of God to be transferred from here (the rational faculty) and brought down (to the heart), and then for this remembrance to be uninterrupted. It

calls for a great deal of asceticism and is not easily achieved. And undistracted attention is necessary for someone to reach that point.

When, however, the one who has acquired this single-thought prayer arrives at this point, he can become a bishop and engage in administration, because he has this prayer and whatever he does and wherever he goes, he has this prayer. He departs in order to acquire it, and afterwards he returns. Do you understand? Is this not so? He returns and has this prayer and continues to be an ascetic."

The aim of Christians is to become holy, in accordance with the exhortation: *"Because it is written, you shall be holy, for I am holy."* (1 Pet. 1:16). Unfortunately many people think that it is impossible to live according to this aim except in monasticism, whereas in the early Church all Christians lived ascetically. Thus the Apostle Paul says: *"The time is short, so that from now on even those who have wives should be as though they had none, those who weep as though they did not weep, those who rejoice as though they did not rejoice, those who buy as though they did not possess, and those who use this world as not misusing it. For the form of this world is passing away. But I want you to be without care"* (1 Cor. 7:29-32).

Monasticism is not an unscriptural way of life. It is not something that originated from outside influences. It is not something additional introduced into the Church at a later date. It is the genuine Christian and evangelical life.

"Monasticism is not the result of Syrian influence. I don't know why historians are searching to find where monasticism originated."

Monasticism is the practice of the Gospel commandments. This is the context in which Orthodox monasticism functions. Orthodox asceticism was experienced in the monastery.

"The ascetic training of the Orthodox Church is for all Christians. However, its success, at least historically, was notable mainly in the monasteries and ascetic centres of the Church. From then on it becomes very powerful. It was not just in the desert. There were monasteries in the cities, and Constantinople itself was full of monasteries, as you will recall. The monasteries were not only outside Constantinople but also inside it.

The modern tendency is to drive monasteries out of the cities and for them to go into the hills, so that they will not influence people so much and defile neo-Hellenism, which always wanted to follow the bourgeois way of life, so that a bourgeois society, like the European and American bourgeoisie, would evolve. Of course, monasticism was dangerous for the bourgeois. Now, I am unable to understand why the Communists regard monasticism and religion as dangerous."

"The view prevails today that this tradition is for monks, not for the others. So is it only monks who are ill? Aren't all the rest of us ill? Are they in need, whereas we aren't? Why? Because unless someone takes this path it is impossible for him to attain the love that *'does not seek its own'* (1 Cor. 13:5). It is out of the question, he cannot possibly get there, it is absolutely impossible. One can only reach this unselfish love by the grace of God."

"In the monasteries they went through the three stages of perfection. Once they had reached at least illumination, the metropolitans took them and appointed them bishops in dioceses and metropolises, or metropolitans in patriarchates."

In a prayer during the profession of a monk of the great schema, the priest says to the candidate for the great schema: "O new vocation! O gift of the sacrament! Today, Brother, you receive a second baptism through the superabundant gifts of God Who loves humankind. You are cleansed of your sins and become a son of light, and Christ our God Himself rejoices with His holy angels over your repentance, killing the fatted calf for you." This is repentance as purification of the heart and the path to illumination, the activation of the grace of Baptism.

"Noetic worship, however, is not performed by man. Man does not do noetic worship: it is the work of the Holy Spirit. When the Fathers were asked who was a temple of the Holy Spirit, they replied that someone in whom the Holy Spirit has come to dwell is a temple of the Holy Spirit. How did they know that the Holy Spirit had come to dwell? If he had prayer in his heart. This was the criterion. In this way spiritual fathers knew who was a temple of the Holy Spirit and who was not. It was not simply a matter of Baptism

and Chrismation, in a mechanical way, but it was this reality of the visitation of the Holy Spirit."

Thus monasticism continues the life of the early Church, without this meaning, of course, that the Church was abolished in the world. Monasticism is its living manifestation. Once Christians became secularised, monasticism becomes "the bearer of Orthodox spirituality", "the bearer of the Orthodox tradition, which is called spiritual psychiatry", that is to say, "the cure of man's noetic faculty".

Because monks have acquired experience of dogma and neither speculate nor use syllogisms, as happens in scholastic theology, they always support the Orthodox tradition. They are defenders of the Church's dogmas.

"Monasticism is one of the keys to Orthodox spirituality. And the strange thing is that monks always uphold the Orthodox tradition. Even though many of them are not well-educated in worldly terms, they know the dogmas of the Church from their experience."

It is natural for bishops, who are the teachers of Christians and monks, to come from the monasteries, after having acquired empirical knowledge of the truths of the faith. In this sense the bishop is said to be the teacher of monks and the monks are pupils.

"In the era of St Photius the Great bishops were forbidden to become monks, because monks are pupils whereas bishops are supposed to be teachers. In Dionysios the Areopagite the bishop is called the teacher of monks."

There is a serious explanation for this fact:

"The bishop is the teacher of monks in the highest sense. Why? Because the bishop was responsible for preparing his successors, as an astronomer does. Someone studies astronomy in primary school, then he goes to high school, later to university, and at university he has someone as his professor who knows how to use the telescope and all the charts, the classification of stars, the measurement of stars, the method of analysing stars and so on. This professor of astronomy at university first of all has students who study for a degree and take a special subject that is related to astronomy. Afterwards comes the doctorate."

This used to happen in the early Church as well. The bishop came from monasticism. He had empirical knowledge of the Church's dogmas, and then he taught the monks to acquire 'dogmatic consciousness'.

"The bishop was regarded as the teacher of monks, mainly of monks. Why? If you go to Paros you will see that the cathedral there is the central church of the monastery. There is a monastery. All round the cathedral in Paros there are cells: it is a monastery. That is why the bishop or metropolitan's senior official is called a *protosynkellos*. What does *protosynkellos* mean? What does a monastery consist of? It consists of cells. *Syn-kelli* means those who share cells. The monks of the monastery are *synkelli* and the *proto-synkellos* is the first among the monks. The monks have the bishop as their abbot. The bishop is the abbot of the monastery.

Even St Sophia in Constantinople is called 'the Great Monastery' in popular tradition. Why is it the Great Monastery? Because it is the cathedral, there is a monastery and the Patriarch is the abbot. This means that it is a cathedral and that it has a *protosynkellos*, someone who is 'first among the monks'. Now in America they have a married *protosynkellos*. The *protosynkellos* of the Archdiocese of America is a married priest. I shall ask to become *protosynkellos* here in Greece.

So the bishop is the teacher of the monks. He used to teach those monks, and of course those monks were also in a position to become metropolitans, patriarchs and so on. Why? Because they knew diagnosis and therapy. Why was the bishop the monks' teacher? In order to teach them diagnosis and give them therapeutic treatment, so that they could do the same for others as well."

Thus the monastic life is a path to knowledge of God, through the method that monks follow, which is purification, illumination and glorification. For that reason, although some educated monks studied, knew and copied the works of the classical Greek philosophers, they did not follow their teaching. Some analysts who are ignorant of this fact describe them as illiterate.

"There were no bishops in the Church who were not monks. The monks used to go out of the monasteries, and every time they saw

a wise man they all chased after him. The monks did not want to hear anything about classical Greek philosophers and the like. When they heard Plato and Aristotle mentioned, they repeated what the Fathers say about Plato and Aristotle. They mocked them both. Then Korais comes along and says these monks are illiterate and do not know what they are talking about..."

The monks had the power and energy of the Holy Spirit within them. They had the experience of Pentecost, a power that was superior to the philosophers' knowledge.

"They re-evaluate the monks as illiterate, and you ask yourself, 'Come on now! Someone who is capable of taking a Muslim who has become an Orthodox Christian and teaching him noetic prayer, so that he goes to the town square to confess Christ publicly, and afterwards goes through such tortures rather than denying Christ – can this monk who taught him noetic prayer really be illiterate?"

There are some people who accuse monks, particularly hesychasts, of contributing to the fall of Constantinople. However, this is not true, because there is a difference between politics and theology, just as there is a difference between political science and medical science. Hospitals and doctors continue to treat people whatever the political situation. In any case, it was hesychasm that preserved Orthodox teaching during the years of Turkish domination.

"There are those who say that monks are to blame for the fall of the Empire of Constantinople. 'The monks ruined Byzantium. The monks are to blame for all the many evils that befell the nation...' This is like saying that those old doctors who had found the treatment for cancer, who had found the treatment for tuberculosis, who had found the treatment for so many illnesses before Constantinople fell – they are to blame because Constantinople fell.

Wait a moment! What does medical science have to do with politics? Medicine is not the same as politics. They have no connection with each other. Of course the doctors did everything they possibly could to save the Empire, but the Empire had reached such a point that it could not be saved. Medical science, however, was saved. It was preserved all through the years of Turkish domination. The

strange thing is that the Greek state also destroyed medical science, which had been so successful for so many years."

When we speak of 'the science of spiritual medicine' we mean the method of Orthodox devotion, the hesychastic tradition. After the liberation of Greece from the Turkish yoke, however, an attempt was made to uproot the monasticism of the Fathers and introduce a foreign type of monasticism, alien to the Orthodox tradition, so-called Western monasticism.

"Some conservative neo-Hellenists have now turned in favour of monasticism. But when they begin to approve of monasticism, they approve of the Western type of monasticism, not that of the Fathers. Of course they say that they are in favour of patristic monasticism, because they imagine that the early Fathers had a sort of monasticism that was more like modern Western monasticism than the monasticism that existed in the years of Turkish domination.

They say that the monasticism of the period of Turkish domination, the subjugation of Constantinople and hesychasm ought to be rooted out, so that we can return to the ancient monasticism of St Basil the Great and Chrysostom, which is more or less what the Westerners have, with hospitals and so on, according to these fools. Of course the early monks also had hospitals, but that was not their aim; that was not the purpose of monasticism. There is confusion here in Greece, on account of Korais."

The decision of the Church of Greece and the decision of the Pan-Orthodox Conference of 1930 that monasticism should be used for social and charitable work should be seen in this perspective.

"The decision of the Church of Greece in 1930 to suggest to the Pan-Orthodox Conference of Orthodox Churches – Held where? On the Holy Mountain! – that we Orthodox ought to abolish traditional monasticism and accept Western-style monasticism is well known. Were they inspired by God? Were they divinely-inspired Fathers, as they decided, in so many words, to abolish divine inspiration? Why? Because for the Fathers of the Church divine inspiration is the uninterrupted prayer of the Holy Spirit within man's heart.

This is the purpose of Orthodox monasticism, and what did those bishops decide? To do away with Orthodox theology. That is what they decided, in so many words. Why did they decide to abolish Orthodox theology? Because they decided to abolish therapeutic treatment. They decided to do away with the patristic and scriptural method of diagnosis."

Anyone who is an enemy of Orthodox monasticism is an enemy of Orthodoxy.

"Whether someone speaks against monasticism or against the sacred relics, it means he is an enemy of Orthodoxy."

7. Heresies and Councils

From the time when the Church was first founded various heresies appeared, and the Church dealt with them by means of Councils.

The word 'heresy' denotes a view that differs from the official teaching of a religion or the Church. It is a false doctrine. In the Apostle Paul's address to the elders of Ephesus, he referred to heretics who would come out of the midst of the Church itself. *"For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves"* (Acts 20:29-30).

In one of his Epistles St Paul refers to heresies that had already developed in the first Church: *"For there must also be factions* [literally: 'heresies'] *among you, that those who are approved may be recognised among you"* (1 Cor. 11:19). The appearance of heresies shows that the Christians are approved, because it manifests their stability. In another of his Epistles he speaks about how they ought to deal with heretics: *"Reject a divisive* [in Greek *hairetikos*, 'heretical'] *man after the first and second admonition, knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned"* (Tit. 3:10-11).

The early Church dealt with heresies on a personal level and through Councils. St Paul in his Epistles confronts many such false teachings, but the Church also convened the Apostolic Council in Jerusalem to deal with the manner in which Jews wishing to be baptised should enter the Church (Acts 15:6-29). This first Apostolic Council became the model for all the other Councils that were convened later in the Church. In the following pages we shall look at the subject of heresies and Councils.

a) Heresies

Heresy is formulated by one or more individuals who teach a different doctrine and form various heretical groups. In the beginning these groups act within the Church, but subsequently they leave it and become active outside the Church. They oppose the revealed faith in many different ways.

i. What is heresy?

Heresy with regard to the dogmatic teaching of the Orthodox Church is usually a false teaching that is articulated and formulated through other dogmas. Because dogmas, theoretical teachings, are connected with practical life, however, heresy is also connected with the way of life of those who preach it. For example, the view that the Word is a creation of God the Father shows that the man who proclaims this does not have true spiritual knowledge of God. Because, if he were a real theologian who had seen God, he would know that Christ as God is uncreated, and the glory of the divine nature is uncreated. Hence he is a speculative philosopher and not a God-seer.

Heresy is usually limited to theoretical teaching, and someone who deviates from the declared dogmas of the Church is regarded as a heretic. We ought, however, to look at the inner dimension of heresy. Just as dogmas are an expression of the revelation and implementing the dogmas leads to experience, so heresy is a deviation from the revelation, but at the same time it destroys the path to glorification. It is as though there were a hospital that could not treat people.

> "When the Church faces a heresy, the criterion for it being a heresy is that it overturns the experience of Pentecost, when *'all truth'* was revealed, and it stops people progressing towards glorification. That is why heresy is dangerous."

The experience of Pentecost is overturned because heretics deny the teaching of the glorified Fathers of the Church. They abandon the revealed truth and rely mainly on their reason and speculation.

"They change the tradition on account of rational schemes that they think up. They have more faith in their reason than in the experience of the glorified, so they conceive something with their rational faculty and identify it with the reality concerning God. All the heresies originate from this sort of mistaken basis."

This means that heretics rely more on philosophy, which is full of thoughts, conjectures and fantasies, and do not rely on the revelations of God. Because they depend on philosophical principles, in reality they also deny the teaching that leads to the vision of God.

"Arianism is not a heresy simply from the point of view of theoretical knowledge and erroneous conjectures. Arianism is a heresy because it destroys the teaching about glorification. It does not understand the subject of glorification, the relationship between created and uncreated, and so on. And a heresy can never change dogma into experience, because its dogma always remains a bad experience and is not the experience of glorification. If you look at all the heresies, you will see that the criteria for heresies are spiritual. Heresies are heresies because they do not lead where they ought to lead. Heresy cannot lead to sound spiritual life."

"Heresy springs from a lack of purification and illumination. When someone does not have illumination, he runs the risk of falling into heresies, because he confuses his thoughts about God with God."

Heretics cannot know God because they do not know the method by which God is known. Every science has its theory, which is confirmed by experiment. Every verification by experiment leads to the same theory.

"The heretic does not have the method of purification, illumination and glorification, so it is impossible for anyone to learn from him the method of attaining glorification."

"Heresy consists in someone's inability to discern between created and uncreated energies, and that heresy originates from the nous being darkened. Because his nous is darkened, he theologises by imagination and conjecture. Patristic theology, on the other hand, is not speculative. Spiritual fathers do not speculate, because if they

speculated there would be no cause for anyone to escape from the devil. And it is possible to escape from the wiles of the devil."

Heresy does not relate only to dogmatic issues, but also to the spiritual life. For instance, separating the Christian life into theory (dogma) and practice (asceticism) is an error. Some people accept the dogmas and reject their presuppositions.

ii. The Difference between the Orthodox and Heretics

It is clear from the above that, just as there is a difference between truth and heresy, so there is a difference between the Orthodox and heretics. In the same way as dogmas are formulated by specific people, those who are glorified, so heresies are formulated by theologians who philosophise.

The Orthodox Fathers know the terminology about God, but they also know the method for reaching personal knowledge of God.

"Someone who is glorified knows how to use the terminology about God and does not allow himself or his catechumens or his spiritual children to fall into error by thinking that it is possible to conceive God through reason."

The difference between the Orthodox and heretics should be specified in medical terms. The Orthodox Fathers are real scientific doctors, whereas the heretics, who use another method (speculation), are charlatans, sham doctors.

"In the Middle Ages rulers knew very well indeed what the difference was between Orthodoxy and heresy. What is the difference? The difference is extremely simple. There is no therapeutic treatment for man's nous in heresy. In Orthodoxy, however, man's nous is cured. In Orthodoxy there is therapy for the human personality, and the saints are the proof.

Heretics were something like charlatans and they promised some sort of life after death. In this present life, however, they did not give treatment to their faithful, nor did they offer anything better than one more superstition. Heresies were, and still are, 'after death' religions. A heretic was someone whose dogmas were not Orthodox and so did not allow him to reach purification and illumination.

Orthodoxy, however, offers this cure and leads man to purification and illumination."

"What was the difference between heretics and the Orthodox? The latter had therapeutic treatment for the noetic faculty, purification, illumination and glorification, and the former did not. This was the difference between them. There is no correct treatment in heresy."

"If we have acquired the patristic interpretative keys, it is possible to ascertain what is Orthodox and what is heretical, and the basic criterion is success. The success of a faith was that it cured people. The Orthodox tradition offered real therapeutic treatment, and the proof of this was the state of illumination itself, as this state of illumination did not exist among the heretics. That was the problem. The criterion was that that the heretics were not cured and the Orthodox were being cured. Just as today we would make a distinction between real doctors and charlatans, so, by means of these criteria of purification, illumination and glorification, which did not exist among heretics, using these criteria the state decided that heretics were charlatans."

"Most heretics, if you examine the biographies of heretics, you will see that heretics were usually good people. If they had not been good people they would not have had followers. And they would not have been – what are those people called who lead people astray – they would not have been demagogues. Usually the demagogue is someone who is good at speaking. He persuades people forcefully, he says fine things and he uses eloquent turns of phrase. And people accept their heresies because their heresies are usually camouflaged in fine words. If someone were to say evil things, how would he gather supporters? He gathers supporters because he says pleasing things. Isn't that so? He has a good outward appearance and looks truthful, as do charlatans."

Heretics who have been condemned or have distanced themselves from the Church do not belong to the Body of the Church. That is why the Orthodox do not pray together with non-Orthodox heretics.

The members of the Church gather together to pray as its members.

The Church prays specifically for each case. It prays collectively for those being purified, that they may be purified and led to glorification, and for the glorified, that they may be led from glory to glory.

The Church also prays that heretics may return to the Orthodox faith. The Divine Liturgy of St Basil the Great contains the prayer: "Lead back those who have gone astray and unite them with Your Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church."

> "If we have a spiritual father who is in the state of illumination and has noetic prayer, can we sit and pray for his illumination? That is forbidden; it is senseless. That is why it says that we ought to pray in accordance with the state each one is in. This means that, according to the Fathers of the Church, there are ways of knowing exactly where each one stands, and praying accordingly.
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> When we bear this in mind we see the foolishness of contemporary Orthodox who pray together with the non-Orthodox. Not because the non-Orthodox are bad people – no, they are not bad. Let us pray a thousand times for the non-Orthodox, certainly. We pray for the non-Orthodox: that is incumbent upon us. But to pray together with them – what sense is there in that?
>
> As we cannot pray together, if we are in the state of illumination we do not even pray with the catechumens. We do not pray with those who are excommunicated, or with those who are classed as penitents. We pray for heretics but we do not pray with them."

This is because the Church always prays as a Body in worship and in the Mysteries.

iii. Dialogues between the Orthodox Church and other Confessions

The departure of some heretical groups from the Church has created various problems, and the aim is to bring them back; this is called 'unity of the Churches'. Dialogues take place to identify the issues that divide or unite; points in common and differences are examined. Dialogues are possible, but they must take place in a correct manner.

> "In this context the dialogue between 'Churches' is a good thing. It does no harm and is actually good for us and for the other Chris-

tians. It is good for us, because it forces us to think more seriously, more scientifically and more historically; and it is very beneficial for the others because until now the Protestants and Papal Christians are amazingly ignorant of the Orthodox tradition.

Dialogue ought to take place in all directions. I think, however, that dialogue with the positive sciences should come first, because this dialogue with the positive sciences will have a very great influence on the dialogue with other Christians: Protestants, Papal Christians and Monophysites."

The dialogue between the Orthodox Church and other Confessions can identify the differences, but unity cannot come about, unless the heretics are corrected. This is because they have difference presuppositions. There cannot be unity between the Orthodox and heretics, just as there cannot be unity between scientific astronomers and conjectural astrologers.

"Ancient astronomy was called astrology, and here there is a clear distinction between astronomy and astrology. Astronomy is a science based only on experience, only on reality. By contrast, astrology is based on observation but also on conjecture. In the realm of observation it was inadequate, because it used the naked eye and was unaware of the possibility of using or constructing scientific instruments, so that these scientific instruments could assist in making man's eyes and his ability to observe more powerful, so that he could see reality more accurately.

The astronomer uses his eyes and his senses, but aided by instruments invented by human beings themselves. Astrology, however, goes one step beyond observation. By speculation and by means of superstitions, the astrologer believes that through astrology he can practise religion, prophesy, worship, explain various phenomena and even foretell the future...

Astrology goes beyond the bounds of controlled science, which is based on experience and experiments, and it goes here, there and everywhere. Thus astrology is now identified with superstition.

Now imagine if we were requested, with continual complaints from politicians, in an effort for the common good, to find some way of uniting astrology and astronomy, so that astrologers and as-

tronomers would no longer quarrel with each other. And if there were an order, and pressure from contemporary society, that astrologers and astronomers should be united, so that instead of having two different associations, they would all be subject to one worldwide association.

Let us suppose that that there were two or three associations of astrologers and one association of astronomers. Would it be possible today for serious people in the world, ordinary citizens and their rulers – would a serious attempt ever be made by those in power, political leaders and so on, to order that an effort be made to unite astrology with astronomy? And for them to become one science, with scientists on equal terms and one unified administration? Is such a thing really possible? I pose the question. Wouldn't it make everyone laugh if anyone ever suggested such a thing? I am asking. What do you think? Surely it would be a joke. Wouldn't it be a joke? Of course it would be a joke."

"Clearly in astronomy and astrology no one would ever think up the idea – today – that there should be an ecumenical movement for the unification of astronomers and astrologers."

We can also see this in the difference between medicine and magic.

"I think the same would happen in medical science. Could we ever imagine a proposal that modern medicine – which requires training in the medical school of a university that is recognised by the universities of Europe and America in the Western world and perhaps also by Russia, because medical science is excellent there too – should be united with astrology and magic?

Is it possible to note the requirement that medical schools be recognised by those European, Russian and American medical schools, and for the medical school of Athens University to seek recognition from the doctors of those representatives of Buddha who practise Buddhism in various parts of America, or from African practitioners of magic, or from witch doctors and the like, who, when someone falls sick, concoct magic potions, and may even put on some sort of dance, and prance around to chase the evil spirits away?

Could anyone ever imagine a union between doctors who have

graduated from European-style universities and doctors who have not even finished high school, but have acquired their medical knowledge from some magical system? And would you believe that they cured people by means of magic?"

These two examples of the impossibility of union between astronomers and astrologers, and between doctors and practitioners of magic, show that there cannot be unity between the Orthodox, who know the true way to cure people, and the non-Orthodox, who do not know how to cure people and are unable to do so.

"Obviously it would be inconceivable for political leaders or any other leaders to call upon doctors to form a society with witch doctors, who have not graduated from the medical school of a Western-style university. Isn't this so?

Perhaps in religion the same sort of criterion exists? If there is a religion or a form of Christianity which resembles astronomy in its scientific method, and there is another Christian group which has a method that bears no resemblance at all to astronomy, but is much more like astrology, could we seriously say that these two groups of Christians ought to renounce their differences and unite, for the sake of the need for Christian unity? Why should astronomer-theologians unite with astrologer-theologians?"

Such a 'union' cannot be valid, because they have different methodologies and aims.

"In the first place, from the point of view of scientific accuracy, it is never permissible for an 'astronomy-type' scientific method to be muddled up with an 'astrology-type' scientific method, and for the two to be merged into one. From the scientific point of view this is invalid. On the other hand, it is even worse in medical science, if one method cures and the other does not cure – and not only fails to cure, but causes serious damage to health.

How will these two theological or medical methods be combined into one? Can they be unified? The one method is successful in operations in the majority of cases. Operations, surgical procedures and so on are carried out successfully. Medicines are given with a high degree of success. Let's assume it has 85% success in treating

the sick. The other method has a success rate of 10%, and this 10% of successes can be explained as due to natural developments in the patient and the natural healing process, not as a cure by the witch doctors. Can these two methods be amalgamated? That is the question. Yes or no?

Perhaps there is something similar in theology? That is why we have already touched on the subject a little, so that we can make a comparison between particular presuppositions of Christian theology, which one can get from a simple description of the reality of patristic theology, as compared with Protestant, Papal and Monophysite theology. In this way one sees what the facts are, what analysis is given as regards the Fall of man, and what therapeutic treatment each of these groups of Christians offers."

All these issues are mentioned here because patristic theology is clearly different from Western theology, scholastic and Protestant. The medical interpretation of this issue helps us to see the mentality of heretics, but also the way in which unity is pursued. Unity will only come about if real spiritual criteria are acquired.

"In the same way as it is impossible for there ever to be unity between an association of sham doctors and the Medical Association, so it is impossible for there ever to be unity between the Orthodox and heretics. A real doctor is not someone who simply reads a lot of medical books, but someone who has graduated from the medical school of a university, and has simultaneously trained for some time with an experienced professor of proven ability in curing the sick."

It is, however, well known that in Western Christianity they used reason and speculation in order to speak about God. The stages of spiritual perfection – purification, illumination and glorification – were abolished. The hesychastic way of life was lost. The problem, therefore, is not simply that differences and false teachings must be identified, but that this hesychastic and therapeutic way of life must return. The difference is not a matter of terminology but of therapeutic method.

"For this reason I raise the issue of interpretative keys, in a purely scientific way, not dedication or a particular tradition. This is not a matter of a particular tradition; it is a matter of therapeutic

treatment. It is a therapeutic issue. We are speaking from the point of view of medical science not theology."

When there are many doctors and each of them claims to know the drug for curing cancer, obviously we have to investigate which of them is able to cure it.

We can look at what is called the ecumenical movement in this context.

"Where is the cure? Is there a cure or not? Well, a doctor comes along and says: 'I have found a way of curing cancer.' Along comes another and he too asserts: 'I have found a way of curing cancer.' And a third one appears and says: 'I have found a way of curing cancer.' Well, as we have three claims to cure cancer, we say, 'All right, let's test all three to see which of them cures cancer.'

So the Anglican doctor asserts, 'I believe that all three cure cancer.' The Papal Christian comes along and says, 'Only those who accept the infallibility of the Pope of Rome can cure this cancer, only these doctors.' Afterwards the other one comes along and says, 'Only the Protestant doctor is capable of curing cancer.' Then there is also an Orthodox Christian who says: 'Only the Orthodox doctor cures cancer.'

So we will wait and see which of all these doctors cures cancer. If we can ascertain that they all cure cancer, let's get going with the ecumenical movement, regardless of anyone's objections, and let's lump all Christians together, and we'll see if a united Christianity comes out of this mixture."

This means that we should look carefully at who can really cure people, who can lead Christians to glorification and communion with God. The Latins have reached the point of regarding the Pope as infallible as an institution, and have done away with the method that leads people to unerring theology. So how can he be infallible? The one who reaches glorification is free from error.

"This is why I used to say to the Latins that I would have no objection to accepting the infallibility of the Pope, provided I ascertained that the Pope was in the state of glorification. In that case, whatever he said would be without error. When, however, the Pope

does not even know what theoria is, and does not know what praxis is, and does not know what noetic prayer is, and does not practise it or even know of its existence, how can I accept that the Pope is infallible?

Well, I accept the Apostle Peter as infallible, because he was at the Transfiguration and also at Pentecost. But as I have no indications that the Pope of Rome shares in the experience of glorification and that he is glorified, how can I automatically accept, solely on account of his ordination, that he is infallible? I can't do it. It is not scientifically possible, from the point of view of psychiatry. Someone who believes in the Pope's infallibility may have a problem. He can't be normal.

One ought to look at the subject from an Orthodox point of view, not in terms of slogans, because here in Greece there is a lot of sloganeering on the subject of the poor Pope's infallibility. An academic cannot rule out anything. He ought to investigate what the criterion for infallibility is, what being free from error means, and so on. Because the concept of being free from error exists in our own tradition. But who are those who have this spiritual gift of discernment of spirits that makes them theologians, so that they do not make mistakes when they theologise about the energies of the demons and the energies of created things?"

The Latins rely on the authority of the Pope.

"In a discussion with a Papal Christian, I asked him:

- But do you really want unity?

He replied:

- Yes, we really want it.

- Let me give you a plan for unity, I said to him, and unity will come about immediately.

In order for there to be unity between the Orthodox and Latins on a Papal basis, you are obliged to convince every single Orthodox Christian. There are two hundred million Orthodox. Imagine how many years it will take for you to convince each one. Whereas from your point of view, only one man needs to be persuaded to change: the Pope. Two million of us have to change. Come on, then, convince the one, the Pope, and union will take place straight away."

In general, heresy is a deviation from the teaching of the Prophets, Apostles and Fathers; a deviation from the decisions of the Local and Ecumenical Councils, but also a change in the presuppositions of Orthodox dogma, which are holy hesychasm and the degrees of spiritual perfection, namely, purification, illumination and glorification, or praxis and theoria.

b) Councils of the Church

Councils were convened to deal with heresies, because the Church makes decisions through Councils. The model for this conciliar structure, as we have already mentioned, was the first Apostolic Council. It is also clear from the Epistles of St Paul, in which he makes mention of his co-workers.

In Volume 1, in the chapter 'The Divinely Inspired Theology of the Fathers' it was particularly emphasised that the glorified Fathers validated the Ecumenical Councils, not the other way round. Here we shall examine the subject of Local and Ecumenical Councils and their necessity for the Church.

It needs to be understood that the Church functions and does its work in a specific place and time, and uses for its form and its canonical structure the external circumstances that it finds. In this manner, and for the sake of its unity, it adopted the same way of working as the society of that time.

> "Something strange can be observed in history: the criteria by which the Church adapts to its surroundings can be traced back to Canon Law. The Church adjusts to the environment.
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> We see this very clearly from the development of the conciliar system in the early Church. The Church was adapting itself to the Roman environment. We see that the metropolitan is the bishop of a metropolis of a Roman province. All the other bishops in the Council are in small villages or towns. And the metropolitan is automatically the president of the Council. Translations from one see to another were never permitted in the early Church, so the bishops never contended for higher positions."

This is how the metropolitan system and later the patriarchal system

of ecclesiastical administration were created. Local Councils were convened on the basis of this administrative system, and later the Ecumenical Councils were convened, which defined the administrative system of the Church more thoroughly.

i. Local and Ecumenical Councils

Councils are divided into **Local Councils**, which are made up of bishops of particular provinces, and **Ecumenical Councils**, in which all the bishops of the Roman Empire take part. First of all, the decisions of the Councils have great significance, like the texts of Holy Scripture. In the Orthodox Church we speak of Holy Scripture and Holy Tradition, and Holy Tradition also includes the decisions of the Ecumenical Councils. These texts are medicines so that one can be led to purification, illumination and glorification. It is only when someone reaches glorification, in the experience of ineffable words, that all created words and concepts are transcended, without being abolished.

Local Councils, which were convened in the various provinces, were more ancient and more ecclesiastical conciliar institutions.

> "If no Ecumenical Council had taken place, if the Church had not prevailed in the Roman Empire, and if the Emperors had not decided that the Orthodox Church would be the official Church of the state, what institution would there be? Would the institution be what it always had been? The bishops were organised into Local Councils, which were the Councils that supervised the ordination of bishops. They supervised the ordination, and then the Councils would send each other letters of commendation. In particular, when the leader of a Council was chosen, they would send letters to other Councils announcing the election and the ordination. And they would send representatives to take part in the ordination. So when a heresy appeared in a Church, it was condemned by the Church itself, and then the decisions were sent to other Churches and everyone agreed that the one who had been condemned was a heretic."

Arius was condemned as a heretic by the Local Council in Alexandria, where he was serving as a priest, when he asserted that the Word was created.

Before the First Ecumenical Council was convened, many heresies had appeared in the Church and all had been dealt with by Local Councils. The First Ecumenical Council was convened by the Roman Emperor Constantine to ascertain what the faith of the Church was. Other Emperors wanted to establish Christianity as the official religion of the state. Exactly the same happened with later Ecumenical Councils.

"There are some foolish people who believe that Arianism was condemned at the First Ecumenical Council. This is nonsense. It was first condemned in Alexandria, and the condemnation of Arianism in Alexandria was accepted by all the Local Councils of the Orthodox Church, in the West and the East. The condemnation starts from Alexandria and afterwards the condemnation is communicated to all the other Churches. The condemnation of Arius is accepted by all the Orthodox.

In other words, there was uniformity in faith before the First Ecumenical Council was convened. Afterwards the First Ecumenical Council was called and the bishops, who had already condemned him in Local Councils, condemned Arius. Arianism was not condemned for the first time at the First Ecumenical Council.

Now, if there had not been a Christian Emperor, and if certain leaders of the Roman state had not wished to establish Christianity as the religion of the Roman state, we would not have had the First Ecumenical Council, nor the Second, Third, Eighth and so on. We would have had Local Councils of bishops, which dealt with heresy and communicated their decision to all the other Councils of the Church. These other Councils immediately recognised that this man was a heretic and had been rightly condemned.

Before the First Ecumenical Council the first heresy in the Church was not that of Arius. There were other heresies as well. The most striking heresies were those of the Sabellians and the Samosatenes. We have two heresies, that of Paul of Samosata and that of Sabellius, which seem to be opposite extremes, but are not opposite extremes."

The Ecumenical Councils are actually 'an extension and amalgamation' of all the Local Councils. They were the result of the need of the state to introduce the decisions of the Ecumenical Councils into its legislation, so that unity would prevail in the Roman Empire.

"Why did the First Ecumenical Council take place? Because we have the Arian dispute. Arianism had broken out as a heresy within the bosom of the Church, and the state had recognised the Church as the religion of the Empire. We have a Church recognised by the state. And now the bishops are quarrelling among themselves.

One party is Arian and the other is Orthodox. Given that it is the official religion of the state, the state ought to know what the faith of the Church is. So the Emperor is obliged to convene representatives of all the Orthodox Councils of the Church to assemble somewhere and deal with all the issues. They must deal with the issue of Easter – because the Empire wants all Christians, at least within the Empire, to celebrate Easter together. Christians in Asia Minor celebrated on the equinox, the fourteenth; they celebrated Easter when the Jews celebrated Passover, on any day of the week. All the others celebrated Easter on the Sunday after the Jewish Passover. This was the practice of the Church.

So this was another issue that concerned the Council, perhaps even more than the dogma of Arius. Arius was immediately condemned, because they all knew that he was a heretic. There was not much discussion at the Council about Arius's teaching. So Arius had already been condemned by all the Local Councils, apart from the Councils where there was no Orthodox Archbishop, for there were certain Churches that had an Arian tendency.

In general it is easy to conclude from studying the acts of the Ecumenical Councils, at least those that survive, that the Council is an extension and amalgamation of all the Local Councils, and that the Council was not convened for the needs of the Church, for the Church had no need of any Ecumenical Council. All the heresies that were condemned in Ecumenical Councils had already been condemned in Local Councils. The Church, therefore, had no need for this Council. The state needed the Council so that it could decree Orthodoxy and the Canon Law of the Orthodox Churches as laws of the state."

The Church knew that Arius was a heretic. The First Ecumenical Council confirmed and ratified that Arius was a heretic. Some people,

however, treat the Councils as though the Fathers argued with Arius rationally in a quest for the truth.

> "How did the First Ecumenical Council spend its time? Our own people reply speculatively. There was a philosophy of the Fathers about God, and the Christian philosophers argued among themselves about God – Arius with Athanasios, and with this one and the other. Then the Holy Spirit came to say what was Orthodox and what was heretical.
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> So they did not know what was heretical until the Council came and condemned the heresy. They found out at the Council what was heretical. Didn't they know that Arius was a heretic before the Council? Was it necessary for the Council to be convened to tell us that Arius was a heretic? This is like saying today that a charlatan, a butcher-surgeon, appears and two other doctors do not know that he is a butcher until they gather at a meeting and decide that he is a butcher. And they don't know that he is a butcher because he kills people. It is not enough that he kills patients and they have to make a decision that he is a butcher.
>
> Something similar happens. Perhaps we not know that Arius is a heretic, as he is a good man and teaches fine, philosophical things, and the Council has to be convened to show us that Arius is a heretic?"

Whenever a heresy appeared, the Council countered it using theological and ecclesiastical criteria. However, when the state wanted to enact ecclesiastical laws for the unity of the Empire, it wanted to be informed officially by the bishops of all the provinces of their decision. The Ecumenical Councils operated in this context.

> "We have the Second Ecumenical Council. Well, did the Churches wait for the Second Ecumenical Council to be convened for the Pneumatomachians and Eunomians to be condemned? The bishops themselves had already well and truly sorted out the Pneumatomachians and Eunomians before the Second Ecumenical Council was convened, and their teachings had already been condemned by Local Councils. Then the Second Ecumenical Council assembles and condemns them. It repeats the condemnation.
>
> The same happens with the Third Ecumenical Council. There

Nestorius had already been officially condemned by the Council of Alexandria. The decision had been communicated to other Churches. The two Churches which did not accept the decision made in Alexandria were the Church of Constantinople, because Nestorius himself was the Patriarch, and then the Church of Antioch, which was divided, because all the followers of Theodore of Mopsuestia were in Antioch. So there was a difficulty; radical disagreement existed on the issue of Nestorius. The Church of Rome immediately condemned Nestorius."

"Then we have the Fourth Ecumenical Council. Once again, Eutyches was not condemned by the Fourth Ecumenical Council. He had been condemned in the Local Councils of Constantinople. These decisions were accepted by Rome and Antioch, whereas Alexandria was in two minds, as it was uncertain what the teaching of Eutyches was. What is certain, however, is that they condemned the heresy of Eutyches, without referring to Eutyches himself, because they were not sure whether Eutyches was teaching the things of which he was accused."

Ecumenical Councils were instituted by the Roman Empire in order to solve ecclesiastical problems that involved all the provinces, so that their decisions would become laws of the state and there would be peace in the Empire. This means that the Ecumenical Councils did not supersede or replace the Local Councils, but they validated them on a universal basis. As the state was aiming for political unity, it was also interested in its religious unity.

"The Ecumenical Councils are an assembly of Local Councils on an Imperial scale. In other words, the Emperor calls the Ecumenical Council, so that the Local Councils could inform the state, the Empire, about the faith and practice of the Church. Then it was an opportunity for the Church as a whole, or the local Churches, to come together and inform the state about the faith of the Church, as well as about the practice of the Church, so that the decisions they took would be the same throughout the Empire.

For that reason, the Canons of the Ecumenical Councils were not meant to supplant the Canons of the Local Councils. The Local Councils had Canons; there were Canons enacted by Local Coun-

cils, Canons about the functioning of the Council or of the various Churches within the Council. It was an opportunity to formalise the common practice of the Church and to draw up Canons of Ecumenical Councils, which would be recognised by the state as the laws of the Church. And the formulation of the faith and everything concerning the faith."

"When one studies carefully the historical foundations, the historical context and the tradition of the Church that existed up until the First Ecumenical Council, it becomes clear that this major conflict between the Arians and the Orthodox broke out and the state wanted to take a view on this issue. The idea was that, while the state was always divided on the subject of religion, and unity was based mainly on weapons and the police – there was also national identity among the Romans, particularly after Caracalla's legislation of 212, when all free citizens within the Empire acquired Roman nationality and the rights of a Roman citizen, from 212 until 313. A hundred and one years later the idea was that, in order for this Empire to survive, grow, expand and increase in strength, religious unity was also required in the state."

Although the Ecumenical Councils were created by the Roman state, they still have theological significance, because bishops took part in them who discussed theological and dogmatic issues, and they extended the work of Local Councils. Local Councils are also divinely inspired, if they are convened according to Orthodox preconditions.

"The institution of Ecumenical Councils is purely and solely Roman. If the Church had not been recognised by the Roman Empire, I doubt whether we would have had Ecumenical Councils, because they were essentially the work of the Emperors.

Since the fall of Constantinople, therefore, some of our own people hold the view that we cannot have Ecumenical Councils now, as we do not have an Emperor. You know, professors of Canon Law are now attempting to replace the Emperor with the Patriarch of Constantinople.

Be that as it may, we have, on the one hand, the historical issue and, on the other, the theological and dogmatic issue. Even before the fall of Constantinople the same idea occurred to us, that the su-

preme authority in the Church is the Ecumenical Council, and that only the Ecumenical Council can authoritatively enact things that the Hierarchy will perform during the historical development of the Church. This is connected, at least today, with the subject of divine inspiration.

Everyone usually agrees that Holy Scripture is divinely inspired. The writers of Holy Scripture have divine inspiration. Then there are those who believe that there is also divine inspiration at the Ecumenical Council. Few of those who hold this view accept that a Local Council can be divinely inspired. It is the Ecumenical Council that has divine inspiration, which is also expressed through the Hierarchy, when the Hierarchy agrees on an issue."

At the Ecumenical Councils the Fathers did not take part only as individuals, but as representatives of entire local Churches. No distinction was made between Local and Ecumenical Councils on the grounds that the former were inferior and the latter superior; the clue to the difference was that Ecumenical Councils were an extension of Local Councils.

"So we have the Roman Senate, the assembly of Roman elders and the Senate of the Romans, and we have the Emperor, who enacted the laws. The Senate accepted the decrees of the Emperor and placed the seal upon them. When the Emperor signed a law, it became the law of the state and was included in Roman law from then onwards. The state used the same legislative method in religious matters. The Emperor was not able to decide what the dogma of the Church was. The Church had to decide. Constantine the Great, as a result of an inspiration, I don't know if it was divine inspiration or not, convened the First Ecumenical Council, not only to find out what the faith of the Church was, but in order to lay down the faith of the Church.

So the Church gathered at the Ecumenical Council. All the Churches sent representatives, and it is extremely significant that the Local Councils are represented at the Ecumenical Council. The bishops do not attend as bishops. The bishops always go to Ecumenical Councils as members of the Church to which they belong. The leader of every delegation is the metropolitan or the archbishop

of every Church, and then there is the patriarch or the patriarch's representative.

At all the Ecumenical Councils, the bishops do not speak as individuals, as members of the Pan-Orthodox Church. They speak as representatives of their Local Council. As happens today at the Pan-Orthodox Conference. No one goes to the Pan-Orthodox Conference to represent himself. They all go as representatives of their Church, and every Church has the same representation, the same vote, and so on. So in the Acts of the Councils that are preserved, the bishops do not speak at the Councils; the metropolitans speak. The leader of each Council speaks, or someone whom he assigns to state the opinion of the Council. In this way, the view of the local Church is expressed at every Ecumenical Council

The classic example can be seen at the Fourth Ecumenical Council. When the bishops of Egypt were called upon to sign the Acts, they said, 'We cannot sign the Acts, because we do not have an archbishop.' In other words, in order to sign the Acts, the Church of Egypt had to meet as a Church, with its president as chairman, and the Council of Egypt had to decide to sign the Acts. However they did not have a president, because Dioscorus had been condemned by the Fourth Ecumenical Council.

This excuse is a clear indication of how the Local Councils saw the Ecumenical Council. They did not regard the Ecumenical Council as superior to the Local Council, though also not as inferior. It is neither higher nor lower, but is simply an extension of the Local Council. Another very significant point is that the Second Ecumenical Council did not add to the Creed, but corrected the Creed on the basis of new terminology, which did not exist at the time of the First Ecumenical Council. There is a correction from the point of view of terminology, but not with regard to teaching; nothing was added from the point of view of teaching. Some adjustments were made to the terminology, which had now prevailed in all the Churches. Because the Churches had a common faith, but they wanted to have a common terminology as well. It was no longer sufficient to have a common faith; they also had to have a common terminology.

They lay down Canons in order that all the Churches will share the same practice. It was a good opportunity to co-ordinate Canon Law as well. They took the opportunity to do so. But why did they do this? Because the decisions of the Ecumenical Councils and the Canons of the Ecumenical Councils, as long as they are signed by the Emperor, become the law of the state. So this practice of the Local Church had to enter Canon Law, which now for the first time is made on the basis of the united Empire, so that it can be recorded in Roman law. Thus every judge, every Roman official, is obliged to implement this decision, which now becomes the law of the state. So we have the First Ecumenical Council, the Second – a whole series of Ecumenical Councils with canonical and dogmatic decisions that become laws of the land.

Ecumenical Councils should be seen in this context. The modern 'Orthodox' view, that the Council is convened in order for the Church to find out what it is teaching, or to decide what it should teach, is nonsense. Absolute nonsense. It bears no relation at all to the reality."

The Emperors who convoked Ecumenical Councils not only wanted to know the views of local Churches, so that there would be common legislation, but had also discerned the therapeutic character of the Orthodox Church. They wanted to impose the Orthodox faith as a therapeutic system for the inhabitants of the Empire. In other words, they wanted the cohesion of their citizens to be based on a true therapeutic method.

"The basic criterion of the Emperor and the state was that they knew that the Church cured the noetic faculty through purification and illumination. Everyone knew that; there was no one who didn't know that. In the Acts of the Councils one sees the Emperor saying: 'Let everyone judge with his nous.' 'Everyone...with his nous' does not mean 'with his reason'. It means with the spirit that he has in his heart."

The prevailing view today is that an Ecumenical Council cannot be convened as there is no Emperor to convene it. For that reason there is talk of a Pan-Orthodox Council, or a Holy and Great Council. Pan-

Orthodox Councils are convened by the Ecumenical Patriarch, whereas the familiar Ecumenical Councils were called by the Roman Emperor.

"The Patriarch of Constantinople has the right to call an Ecumenical Council, with the consent of all the other Churches. Well, there is no doubt that such a right exists. If the Orthodox Churches want to consult one another and to gather at a Council, that is their right.

This must not be confused, however, with the tradition of the Ecumenical Councils. The tradition of the Ecumenical Councils means the tradition of the Imperial Councils. When the Romans referred to the *oikoumenē* (the inhabited world) they meant what is called in Latin the *universa Romana*, the Roman Universe, the Ecumenical (Universal) Empire. They did not mean the whole world: they meant the Empire.

For that reason in Constantinople there was an ecumenical teacher, an ecumenical this, that and the other. There was an 'ecumenical' version of everything. The top man in the Empire in any post had the title 'ecumenical', not just the Ecumenical Patriarch. The word 'ecumenical' in Constantinople was used in the sense of 'imperial', as we would refer today to a governmental official."

ii. Orthodox Preconditions for Councils

The historical background to Ecumenical Councils that we looked at above does not alter their great value and significance, as they acquired great importance in the life of the Church. Why they were convened and who convoked them does not matter. Their value lies in the theological and theological preconditions on which they were convened.

"The basic precondition, not only for Ecumenical Councils but for Local Councils as well, is that those who attend a Local or Ecumenical Council should be at least in the state of illumination. But the state of illumination does not begin when they say the prayer at the start of an Ecumenical Council. That is not when illumination begins.

Certain fundamentalist Orthodox – I don't know how to describe it – imagine that the historical bishops were like bishops today, who have no idea about dogmas, but have dogmatic experts at their side,

advisers who advise them about dogmas. The bishop is a good man who is involved with orphanages, homes for elderly people, hospitals, good works, building churches, and goodness knows what else. He collects funds to help the poor earthquake victims. That is the bishop: a man of action, or perhaps a man on the boil. Because a mutual friend, a metropolitan, says that his spiritual father used to say: 'Toil, toil, toil then boil, boil and steam away'. In other words, at the end nothing is left.

Some people imagine that all these bishops gathered, who as theology students gained only five marks in their examinations and understood nothing. And when they met, the Holy Spirit came like an axe and struck them a blow on the head. The head opened up, in went the Holy Spirit, and then words of wisdom came out of their mouths. He intervened at the Ecumenical Council or at a Local Council and illuminated the bishops in this manner, so that they reached correct decisions."

What determines that a Local or Ecumenical Council is Orthodox is whether the majority of the bishops who take part in it are in the state of illumination of the nous. Studying the Orthodox Local and Ecumenical Councils reveals that their decisions are Orthodox because they were based on Fathers who not only had theoretical knowledge of the theology of the Church, but were bearers of the revelation. Thus the glorified Fathers gave validity to the Council, not the Council to the Fathers.

"When the representatives of the Orthodox Churches are summoned to the Ecumenical Council or to a Local Council, at any rate the majority of the bishops in those days are supposed to be at least in the state of illumination, and perhaps some of them had gone as far as glorification on occasions. They were men who were very familiar with the issues under discussion.

For this reason they never speak about the faith of Holy Scripture. I have never found a reference to the faith of the Old Testament or of the New Testament. Nowadays, as we have done away with the experience of the Prophets and Apostles, we have, so to speak, abolished illumination and glorification, and we talk about the teaching of the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Fathers of the Church, on the other hand, talk about the faith of the

Prophets, the Apostles and the saints. They never speak about the faith of a book."

"The Fathers of the Ecumenical Councils – we are talking now in terms of modern Orthodox theology – the decisions of the Ecumenical Councils are infallible. During the Ecumenical Councils the Fathers were divinely inspired and made divinely inspired decisions about the dogmas of the Church. All right. This was inherited from the tradition. But what is the explanation? When the Bishops who meet at a Council discuss dogmatic issues, pastoral issues and so forth, they have certain criteria.

The first criterion is Holy Scripture, the Old and New Testaments. They cannot teach anything that goes against Holy Scripture. Then there is the continuous tradition of the Church, the Fathers and the saints: the ecclesiastical tradition. Next we have the decisions of the Local Councils. After that, however, we also have the spiritual state of the bishops who assemble. In those days the tradition still existed that bishops, at least, ought to be chosen from among those who have reached glorification. They are what the Apostle Paul calls 'Prophets'.

Anyone who wants to look at these views in detail will find them very clearly stated in *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* of St Dionysios the Areopagite. He sets them out very well there. The bishop is the one who has reached union with God. Union here means glorification, the vision of God and so on. He is what the Apostle Paul terms a Prophet, because in the early Church, the bishop was called a Prophet. In second place we have priests and all the other clergy, who are at least in the state of illumination. So when Fathers in this sort of spiritual state come together at a Council, the Holy Spirit undoubtedly speaks through the bishops.

For that reason the Fathers say, *'It seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us.'* They invoke the fact that this is what the Holy Spirit wills. How do they know that this is what the Holy Spirit wishes? If a group of one hundred bishops assembles and twenty-five bishops are in the state of illumination, these twenty-five will be the leaders of the Council. The others will follow. Why? Because not only do they speak from experience on these matters, but they ap-

peal to the Old and New Testaments and the tradition of the Fathers, and make correct interpretations. So those who follow the interpretation made by these illumined Fathers of the Church are convinced by the arguments and accept these views, even if they themselves are not exactly in the state of illumination.

Now if, on the other hand, one hundred bishops assemble and none of them is in the state of illumination, and not only are they not in this state, but they do not even know what this state is, and they have never heard of noetic prayer or the unceasing prayer of the Holy Spirit in the heart. They have never even met a spiritual father who has spiritual children in this spiritual state. Is it possible for these one hundred bishops to reach Orthodox decisions? I raise the question."

"In fact, in one Council – the Sixth, I think – there is a reference to 'each one' having the witness of his nous, so that the combined testimony of everyone's nous will produce the decision of the Council. In other words, it is the agreement of all those whose nous is illuminated and who have the same experience – they will reach the decision as to whether Christ has two natural wills, one for each energy; or one natural will and one energy."

The Local and Ecumenical Councils were made up "of bishops who knew the therapeutic method of the Church. The Council was convened with the aim of preserving, not simply the dogma and the order of worship of the Church, as happens today, but also the therapeutic method of the Church. A true bishop is an expert on the therapeutic method of the Church."

This therapeutic method is actually Orthodox hesychasm.

"This experience of glorification is the backbone of the Orthodox tradition, as well as the foundation of the Local and Ecumenical Councils, the Canon Law of the Church and the liturgical life of the Church to this day."

"The institution of the Ecumenical Councils is a charismatic institution, not an institutionalised institution. Although there are rules determining how often a Local Council should meet, there are no Canons about convening Ecumenical Councils. Ecumenical Coun-

cils were only convoked in response to circumstances, according to the needs of the Church.

A Local Council are regarded as divinely inspired in its decisions when it is in agreement with tradition, when it agrees with the diagnostic and therapeutic method of the Fathers of the Church, and has the theological tradition that contributes to this. From this point of view one wonders, if the Orthodox Church were to gather today at an Ecumenical Council, what conclusions it would reach. That is why there are some Orthodox theologians who have serious doubts and hesitations about this Ecumenical or Great Council that is going to be convened."

The Holy Spirit acts in the Church according to the state of the members of the Church. The theological concept of synergy applies in all things, as God acts and man co-operates. This also happens in Councils of bishops. The co-operation of the bishops is required in order for the grace of the Holy Spirit to act. In other words, the Holy Spirit does not simply act in man's reason, but in his pure heart, where prayer is being offered.

"Today, however, when noetic prayer is rare among bishops, if a Council of bishops meets and they stand up at the beginning to sing together, 'Heavenly King and Comforter, Spirit of truth, everywhere present and filling all things...', will the Holy Spirit come without fail and enlighten them? Simply because they are canonical bishops and assemble at a Council and pray?

However, the Holy Spirit does not act in that way, with only these preconditions. Others conditions need to be met. The one who prays must have noetic prayer already activated within him when he comes to the Council, in order for the grace of God to enlighten him. Those who attended the pseudo-Councils were not in this state of prayer.

The bishops of old, however, had this sort of spiritual experience and when they came together as a body, they knew what the Holy Spirit was assuring them of within their hearts on a specific subject. And when they reached decisions, they knew that their decisions were correct. Because they were in the state of illumination, and some of them had even reached glorification, *theosis*."

On these preconditions the Ecumenical Councils are infallible, because illuminated and glorified Fathers took part in them.

iii. The Dogmatic Statements and Canons of the Councils

Local and Ecumenical Councils formulated dogmatic statements and sacred Canons. The dogmatic statements of the Ecumenical Councils concerned Trinitarian doctrine and Christology, in other words, dogmatic issues. The sacred Canons referred to the liturgical, administrative and pastoral life of the Church. The decisions of Ecumenical Councils on dogmatic matters are called 'definitions', dogmas or 'symbols of the faith' (creeds). Dogmas, together with the texts of Holy Scripture and the Fathers, are the created words and concepts through which are conveyed the ineffable words received by the glorified during their experience.

> "Holy Scripture, the patristic writings and the decisions of the Councils are the symbols of the faith, which record words and convey concepts. All divinely inspired words that express divinely inspired concepts are themselves divinely inspired, because they are diagnostic and therapeutic. And this therapy is salvation. The Church looked to these writings because they were the foundations of its diagnostic and therapeutic method.
>
> However, as soon as one identifies theology with the philosophical method and gets entangled with any form of philosophical method and epistemology, whether of Aristotle or Plato, Kant or Marx, he uproots his patristic tradition from its natural foundations. He eradicates the foundations of patristic theology.
>
> He takes the words and concepts of Holy Scripture or of the Fathers or of the Ecumenical Councils as philosophical exercises and tries to understand these words and concepts through some sort of philosophical epistemology. He is very far removed from the scriptural and patristic tradition, and it is impossible for him to understand Holy Scripture, the Fathers of the Church and the decisions of the Ecumenical Councils. It is absolutely impossible."

Dogmas were not formulated for philosophical reasons, but to protect the faithful from heretics and to instruct them in life in Christ.

"So the Fathers repeatedly condemn heretics for their philosophical method in matters of dogma, whereas the Fathers' theological method was a purely spiritual method."

"It was necessary to formulate dogmas for catechetical reasons, and so that the faithful would be preserved from heretics; so that they would know who the sound teachers were, and would be able to find therapeutic treatment. This treatment did not exist among heretics."

iv. Condemnation of Heretics

The interpretation that heretics are sham doctors and charlatans, who cannot cure people but even make them ill, shows why they were condemned by the Church. It was not done out of malice, hatred and fanaticism, but in the same manner as scientific doctors are distinguished from charlatans. The Church's aim was to cure people, whereas the heretical charlatans not only fail to cure people but contribute to their eternal death.

"What is heresy? In the patristic tradition, heresy is fake medicine. Why is heresy condemned? Is it because they do not agree on dogma? Is that the problem? It is condemned because there is no therapeutic treatment in heresy. And as there is no treatment, it is dangerous for people. The Fathers saw heresy as a form of charlatanism, which offers no cure."

"I think that we can understand the basic difference if we take medical science as an example. There we have doctors who belong to the Medical Association. If a doctor is not a member of the Medical Association, he cannot practise in the medical profession. For a doctor to be legal, he not only has to be a graduate of a recognised medical school, but also a member of the Medical Association. The same applies to lawyers. In these disciplines there is continuous testing, because if someone behaves improperly with regard to the correct practice of his profession, he is condemned by the appropriate organ of the professional association to which he belongs, and is expelled from the professional body.

The same, however, happens in the Church. The corresponding procedure within the Body of the Church, the expulsion or cut-

ting-off of one of its members, is called excommunication; or deprivation of clerical orders, if it is a matter of ecclesiastical rank. Thus heretics are excommunicated from the Body of the Church. Just as in the medical world it impossible for a charlatan (a sham doctor) to be permitted to treat people, so in the Church it is not possible for a heretic to be allowed to treat people's souls. Because, being a heretic, he does not know how to cure and is unable to cure."

"When we examine the teachings of the Ecumenical Councils, we see that every heresy that was condemned by the Church automatically abolished the Church's teaching on glorification and illumination. In this way the opportunity to be cured is lost. Heresy is heresy because it destroys the possibility of people being cured. That is why it is heresy."

By condemning heretics the Church safeguarded the spiritual therapeutic method that leads to glorification.

"Apart from anything else, there may be unrest, so for that reason they reach a decision that what 'Father Demetrios' says is drivel. It is the result of identifying the theological method with philosophy. They condemn him, so that no one will take any notice of what he says. Because anyone who follows that route will never advance from purification to illumination, and from illumination to glorification. Because someone in the state of illumination cannot say such senseless things."

It is very important to safeguard the true criteria by which man is cured. If the criteria for illness and cure are not set, the difference between Orthodox Christians and heretics cannot be recognised.

"So how is anyone going to understand, as the Orthodox themselves are charlatans, why we should condemn heretics? Are the results not the same? Because whether you go the Evangelical Church in Athens, or to the Papal Church, or to the Jewish Synagogue, or to the Orthodox Church, the people are all in the same state. None of the Orthodox Christians and none of the Jews are illuminated. From this point of view, our own charlatans are no different from other charlatans. Who is going to condemn?

Because if we make this distinction today, the first people we

shall chase away will be our own spiritual fathers. What criteria shall we use for applying the historical criteria? So we leave things as they are and say, Turn to monasticism to see what the monks are doing. Nowadays there are charlatans there too, even in monasteries.

The most important problem is that of criteria. If we have these criteria and judge what they did in past times with heretics, it is what they do nowadays with fake doctors. They are forbidden to practise the profession of doctor. You cannot have a doctor who is a charlatan, nor can you have bogus medicines on the market."

Heretics were condemned by the Fathers of the Ecumenical Councils because they taught false doctrines that did away with the therapeutic method. For the first time, the Franks at the Council of Frankfurt in 794 condemned an entire nation, not specific individuals, by calling the Greeks heretics.

"At the Council of Frankfurt in 794 for the first time in history a whole nation was condemned as heretical. Previously heretics were individuals: Arius, Nestorius and so on. Either the leader of a heresy would be condemned or the heresy itself, but not a nation. For the first time the Franks condemned a nation, because they condemned the Greeks as heretics."

"Then we have the issue of how the politics of an era influences dogma. When we look at the appearance of heresies from a historical viewpoint, from the apostolic era until the Middle Ages heresies are usually called after their founder. They are described by the name of the heresiarch; or, in other cases, by the name of the heresy itself, such as 'Monophysitism'. We also have Gnosticism, which is also a foreign religion, and so on.

In the Middle Ages, in the middle of the 8th century, writings appear that are preserved in Latin, by their titles, and are summarised in *Contra Errores Graecorum* (*Against the Errors of the Greeks*). As far as I know, this is the first time that, instead of a heresiarch or a heresy, a nation is reviled. Something is wrong, because this is a new tradition in the fight against heresies.

Next, one turns to the Acts of the Council of Frankfurt in 794, to see where this tradition of *Contra Errores Graecorum* comes from. And there one finds the decision of the Council that the

Greeks are condemned as heretics. As what sort of heretics are they condemned? Because, strangely enough, at this Council both the iconoclasts and the supporters of icons were condemned. Both are condemned. Well, were the Franks so intelligent that they could discern that both sides, who were contending with each other in the Roman world, were heretics? How can both be heretics? They ought to have taken up a position either for or against the supporters of icons. They do not take a view in favour of one side or the other. They condemn both.

To condemn both they must be hiding something. There is something wrong, because the Franks were barbarians, but strangely enough at the Council the Greeks were condemned. Even before the Council the *Libri Carolini* were in existence. Tradition says that these books were written by Charlemagne himself, but the theories are that they were written by his theological entourage. The *Libri Carolini* are characterised by hatred for the Romans, not for the Greeks. The Roman nation and everything Roman is reviled in them. Their contents are the conventional point of departure for the Franks' views on the Romans."

Consequently, heresy is a deviation from revealed truth, but also from the methodology that leads to glorification. The Councils, in which at least the majority of those taking part were glorified Fathers, defined the revelation so that the revelation and the way leading to the vision of God would not be altered.

8. Atheism, Religion, Church

Heretics believe in a god whom they have created with their reason and imagination. The god in whom they believe is not the God of revelation, but of rational discovery and the process of speculative thought. This sort of god does not exist.

> "The Fathers call heretics atheists as well. What do they mean by the word 'atheist'? They mean that the god in whom they believe does not exist. He is non-existent. The Fathers of the Church understand this as the non-existence of the god in whom heretics and idolaters believe. This god does not exist. Which God exists? The God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob. In other words, the only God Who exists for the Fathers is the God Who appeared 'to the Prophets, to the Apostles and to the saints of the Church'."

When Western Christians believe that the Holy Spirit proceeds, as regards His existence, from the Son as well (*filioque*), and when the scholastic philosophers attempt to prove the existence of God by rational arguments, this means that they do not have personal experience of God, and such a god is non-existent.

> "The Fathers of the Church have been telling us for centuries now that the god of the *filioque* or of scholastic theology does not exist. When Nietzsche came along and said that god is dead, he did well. What he says is right, because when Nietzsche says 'god', he means the god of metaphysics and the scholastic tradition of the Franks. That god does not exist. Many Europeans who accept that god does not exist follow this same line, that god is dead. Fine, we too should agree. Certainly this god in whom the Europeans have believed for years, this god does not exist. He is non-existent. They are right to denounce him. It is only when someone says that the God of the Orthodox does not exist that it should be disputed."

Religion is concerned with human beings in this life, and enables them to face illnesses, troubles, worries, disasters, and wars. "In other words, that God may arrange everything according to man's needs and desires." It is also concerned, however, with the life to come, that justice may prevail, and man's soul may return to happiness.

Thus religion is essential for human beings, so that harmony may prevail in nature and in human life.

> "With the development of modern science, evidence has been found proving that there were religious cults which did not believe that there was life after death for everyone. There are other cults which simply did not regard faith in life after death as very important, because religion was the science of that era in which the powers of nature were deified, and they believed that the main task of religion was magic. When they analysed the powers of nature, they saw that there was a fundamental struggle in nature, not between classes but between gods. This struggle is waged between the gods of discord and the gods of concord."

Many religious cults attempted to solve these problems.

> "They understood that there was concord and discord in nature, and to establish a balance they believed that there was the god of death and the god of life; and usually fertility was worshipped as a goddess of fertility. In their religious ceremonies they had a depiction of the powers of nature, in which the goddesses of fertility triumphed and the good gods annihilated the power of the gods of death and discord. In this manner, through the magic of these ceremonies, they believed that they were also securing harmony in nature. Concord in nature resulted from the magical commands of the priests, so they could secure what they needed to live. This effort was not originally connected with life after death, but this religiousness existed in order to ensure the essentials in this life."

After that, religion is considered necessary for the life to come, for life after death.

> "I touched upon the question of whether religion amounts to teaching about this present life and teaching about the existence of God for the life to come, so that perfect justice may prevail. Because

there ought to be a righteous God Who will undertake the final evaluation with regard to man's final judgment, so that the unjust may be punished in Hell and good boys and girls may be rewarded in Paradise. Thus religion has to exist, so that justice may prevail and man's longing for happiness may not remain unfulfilled."

Both these reasons for the necessity of religion are based on psychological foundations. In addition, however, there are the metaphysical foundations for religion, as taught by Platonism, Neoplatonism and other ancient philosophical traditions. However, when metaphysics was refuted in the West, the religion associated with it was also refuted.

"One of the main characteristics of Karl Marx, Lenin, Trotsky and all those people is that they rejected metaphysics, because they identified religion with metaphysics."

"The Marxists themselves say that religion has been discredited, since metaphysics has been discredited, because they have the idea that metaphysics forms the basis of religion. Now, if metaphysics is the basis of religion, why did monks oppose metaphysics? Perhaps they had different foundations?

Well, by opposing metaphysics today the communists think that they are demolishing religion. Whereas it might be suspected that, as the Church opposed Korais, perhaps Orthodoxy does not have metaphysical foundations, since we see that the Fathers opposed Aristotle, Plato and all the philosophers of their era. That too is indicative."

It is clear that idolatry and metaphysics, which are religious traditions, identified what is uncreated with what is created.

"By the term 'religion' we mean every attempt to identify what is uncreated with what is created, particularly every attempt to identify representations of what is uncreated with the concepts and words of human thought. This is the basis of idol-worship."

Religion also confuses man's rational faculty with his noetic faculty, and regards them as identical. This creates a major problem, because when the noetic faculty is functioning correctly it keeps the blameless passions blameless and stops them changing into blameworthy passions. For instance, the blameless passion of hunger can be satisfied

without becoming the blameworthy passion of greed. At the same time, the noetic faculty helps blameworthy passions (like greed) to turn into blameless ones (using what is necessary to live). When, however, the noetic faculty is not functioning naturally, man is dominated by the passions and this also has repercussions in his relationship with God.

> "In its natural state, the noetic faculty regulates such passions as hunger, thirst, sleep and the instinct for survival, that is to say, self-preservation, so that they are blameless. In its sick state, these passions become blameworthy. They, together with uncontrolled imagination, create magical religions for bridling the elements of nature, or even for the salvation of the soul from matter in the state of happiness, or for happiness of both body and soul."
>
> "The concepts of the brain, which all derive from the surroundings, become concepts of the noetic faculty that is always rooted in the heart. Thus someone who has passions becomes a slave of his surroundings. As a result, he confuses certain concepts that originate from the environment with his god or gods."

It is clear from all this that religions are closely connected with magic, as propitiation of God, and with superstition, as the identification of God with creation, a belief shared by pantheism. But they are also closely connected with mysticism - the return of the soul, which is immortal by nature, to the uncreated world of ideas from which it fell. All three of these (magic, superstition, mysticism) are spiritual illnesses, as they are faith in a non-existent god. The entire effort of the Prophets, Apostles and saints is concentrated on this point.

> "The Patriarchs and Prophets of the Old Testament, the Apostles and Prophets of the New Testament, and their successors are very familiar with the disease of religion and the Physician Who cures it, in other words, the Lord (Yahweh) of Glory. He is the Physician of our souls and bodies. He cured this disease in His friends and faithful before His incarnation and as God-man He continues to cure it."

Thus the Church is not a religion: it does not believe in a non-existent god or use magic, superstition and mysticism. It is the Body of the God-man Christ. What distinguishes the Church from magic, super-

stition and mysticism is the Mysteries (Sacraments) – Baptism, Chrismation and the Divine Eucharist – in association with purification, illumination and glorification, which are a specific therapeutic practice. With this methodology the noetic faculty is not confused with the rational faculty; the nous is not influenced by the passions and the surroundings; and the uncreated is not identified with the created.

> "The methodology that an Orthodox Christian follows is very different from the methodology followed by the adherent of any other religion. Now this may be emotionally shocking, because we have become accustomed to describing Marxists as atheists, and we do not describe anyone else as an atheist."

As has been stressed, on the basis of purely theological presuppositions, the followers of religions and heretics are described by the Fathers as atheists, because they believe in and worship a god who does not exist. This does not happen in the Orthodox Church.

> "I think that, in order to see these questions in the correct perspective, we must get rid of the idea that Orthodoxy is a religion like other religions. Orthodoxy is not a religion."

Of course, it is possible to observe some external features in the Orthodox Church that also exist in other religions, but there is a great difference in the methodology for acquiring knowledge of God.

> "Orthodoxy is not only a religion. Certainly, from one point of view, Orthodoxy is not a religion at all. I would say that it is not only a religion. At least, it is not a religion identified with superstition."
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> "I personally believe that Orthodoxy is directly linked with psychiatry, psychology, medicine, biology and chemistry, with all the positive sciences in general. The worst thing that has happened to Greek Orthodoxy, and perhaps to all the Orthodox Churches, is this orientation of neo-Hellenism and modern Greek theology – this orientation, this ridiculous orientation – towards ancient Greek philosophy and any kind of philosophy. Theology should have been adapted to the positive sciences and should have used the Orthodox patristic perception of man, which is, of course, the biblical perception of man."

Unfortunately, after the liberation of Greece and the formation of the Greek state, the Church was changed into an 'ethical religion', which is useful for the state, because it brings equilibrium to society, and which itself needs the state. This explains the persecution of monasticism, which lived the therapeutic method, purification, illumination and glorification.

> "In the years following the Greek revolution, there was persecution of monasticism: monks were the cause of all the nation's misfortunes. Constantinople fell due to monks. On account of monks the army was destroyed, the state disintegrated, we became illiterate and we are not now Europeans. Monks are to blame for everything.
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> Here we lived under the Turks, fighting together against a terrible enemy, who could have wiped us out on the slightest pretext at any time, but we survived for so many centuries. And so we reached the point where we almost need the support of the state to prop up the Church.
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> When one looks at the early Church, one sees that the clergy at that time was more like a group of doctors than a group of modern clergy. If one were to take a modern Orthodox cleric and compare him with a priest of ancient times or a bishop of the early Church, and if one were to take a psychiatrist and compare him with the cleric of old, one would see more similarity between the modern psychiatrist and the bishop or priest of the early Church than between the modern cleric and the cleric of ancient times. Not from the point of view of faith, but from the point of view of method."

The Orthodox Church, therefore, believes in the God of the Prophets, Apostles and saints. It is the Body of Christ and sanctifies its members. Christians are taught and helped by Christ to discard magic, superstition and mysticism, to reject idols and idol-worship, and to share to varying degrees in the uncreated energy of God. Thus Christians are not *"without God* (literally: 'atheists') *in the world"* (Eph. 2:12), but are crucified with regard to passions, and acquire knowledge of the true God.

Part 6

Life after Death

Life after Death

Man was brought by God from non-being into being, from non-existence into existence, and despite the Fall he does not return to non-existence, to non-being. He is eternal and it depends on him what type of existence, positive or negative, he will live in eternity.

What is called 'eschatology' is a part of dogmatics. By the term 'eschatology', however, we do not mean only those things that will take place after death and the Second Coming of Christ, but also the experience of the 'last things' starting from this life. Christ, Who is the ultimate end of history, entered history, and anyone who is united with Christ lives the 'eschatological' life from now on. The 'last things' are the life of the saints in the uncreated glory and rule (*vasileia*) of God, which they enjoy starting from the present life. Consequently, both life after death and the eschatological life are a matter of experience and are enjoyed by the saints even from this life.

1. The Death of Man

After the sin of the first-formed human beings, death entered humankind. God told them *"You may eat food from every tree in the garden; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you may not eat; for in whatever day you eat from it, you shall die by death"* (Gen. 2:16-17).

Immediately after the Fall came spiritual death, the separation of man from God. Later bodily death, the separation of the soul from the body, followed. Western theology interpreted death as punishment from God for the disobedience of Adam and Eve.

> "This perception of the Fall was linked with the other perception that Augustine has about ancestral sin from a legalistic point of view: that Adam and Eve sinned and the guilt of Adam and Eve was transmitted also to their descendants. For that reason, since we are all guilty, we are all hounded by death and departure from God."

However, the teaching of the Fathers of the Church is that God is not responsible for death, nor is death man's punishment from God. Instead, death is a consequence of sin and of man's departure from God, Who is true life.

> "In contrast with the Augustinian tradition of the Franco-Latins, the Latins and the Protestants, the Orthodox Fathers stressed that God 'did not make death', but permitted it out of love and mercy, 'that evil and sin might not become eternal'."

Thus death is not a punishment from God but an illness originating from man's departure from God, the source of life. This can also be explained in biological terms, because corruptibility and mortality are connected with the cells of the human organism.

The Revelation of St John speaks of the second death. *"Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second*

death has no power" (Rev. 20:6). The first resurrection is the grace of rebirth, which is received through Baptism, Chrismation and life in the Church, and the second resurrection is the resurrection from the dead. In a broader sense, the first death is the loss of divine grace and the second death is man's complete departure from God or, as we shall see, the experience of God as fire.

> "All who have a part in the first resurrection will also share in the second resurrection. All who have a share in the first death will also die the second death. The first death is the loss of God's grace starting from this life, and the second death is the resurrection of the body at the end of the ages to be judged, when those who do not obey Christ unto death will see the glory of Christ as eternal fire and outer darkness."

2. The Intermediate State of Souls

At biological death the soul is separated from the body. The time will come, however, when the bodies of all human beings will be resurrected, and they will be judged by Christ at His Second Coming. After death the souls live without bodies, and this is called the intermediate state of souls.

> "Between the first and second resurrection, and between the first and second death, there is the partial judgment. This includes, firstly, the saints, who have a foretaste of Christ's glory as Light and, as Christ's friends, have boldness before God on behalf of their brethren. Secondly, those believers who in this life have not reached glorification continue their spiritual preparation for the day of the Lord. They too have a foretaste of the future fruits of glorification, so they rejoice. Thirdly, those who died the first death and know that the eternal fire will be eternal fire for them, since their hearts have been hardened by self-love and they are no longer capable of becoming spiritual perfect as regards the love that *'seeks not its own'*, which is the precondition for attaining to the divine glory of God as Light."

The glorified, after their death, "share in the glory of God", in the divine vision. They are interested in us and pray, and we entreat their intercessions.

> "We call upon the saints as mediators, to intercede, as we know that God's friends have the right and the courage, even the audacity, to argue with God, because they have boldness before God.
>
> We know that those who have boldness before God can help us. Here we have the example of Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham disputed with God, asking whether, if there were such-and-such a number of righteous people, they would be destroyed; and if there were only such-and-such a number, and – I don't know – if there

were ten, and so on. We see him disputing confidently with God on behalf of his people. We see Moses boldly telling God, *'If You blot this people out of Your book, blot me out as well.' 'Are You going to destroy them? Destroy me as well'* (cf. Ex. 32:30-34). He argues with God.

A friend of God has this boldness. And who is a friend of God? Someone who has reached illumination, who departs to the Lord and becomes a holy relic, in other words, a saint of the Church. Such a one has boldness before God, and for that reason, as it is a fact that these saints share in the first resurrection, we believe that they pray for us as we pray for them. In a different way, certainly, but in any event they pray for us, and we call upon their prayers and help. And we have examples of saints appearing to people and helping them. All the lives of the saints are full of such examples. This is an empirical reality which does not originate from any sort of philosophy, but only from the communion of the saints with us who are on this side of the grave."

Of course there are also those who are not ready to see the glory of God.

There are those who "are not ready, because if they see the glory of God in the state they are in, they will see it as consuming fire and not as illuminating light. Since they are not ready, God does not reveal His glory to those people."

The state of men's souls after their departure from the body and before the resurrection of bodies at the Second Coming of Christ is referred to as the intermediate state of souls. The completion of repentance by those souls who had already entered the stage of repentance, but did not manage to complete it, is also understood as the intermediate state.

Christians pray for all the departed, but they pray in a different way for each one. They pray to the saints, whom they know, from their relics and the miracles they perform, to be God's friends and they ask for their intercessions. And they pray to God for the others, that they may find mercy with the Lord.

"Prayer is the prayer of the Body of Christ, the prayer of the

Church. When we become members of the Church we pray as a member of the Church. Therefore, when the priest is present, the priest prays. We don't tell just anyone to say the prayer: the parish priest will say it, or the bishop will say it if he is present. Why? Because we pray all together. As what? As a body, because we are the Body of Christ. For that reason prayer has a pre-eminently collective significance.

That is why every Saturday is dedicated to the souls of the departed, and the service on Saturday is for the departed. That is when memorial services used to take place, and there was a major dispute about whether there should be memorial services on Sunday. To be sure, they should not be on Sunday, because Saturday is the day for memorial services. As the Church as a collective body prays for the dead, it prays for the whole Body of Christ, which is the body of the departed. This part of the Body of Christ includes the departed who are called saints of the Church, even the All-Holy Virgin.

We have the appropriate prayer for each one. Prayer, of course, is an expression of love for all the members of the body, as the Church makes no distinction between the Church after death and the Church before death. All these members together - those beyond the grave and those on this side of the grave - are one Church. There are not two Churches. There is not an invisible Church and a visible Church. There is one Church; there is one Body of Christ.

Consequently, as prayer is collective and we pray for one another, each of us prays for the other, we believe that those beyond the grave also pray for us, and we pray for those beyond the grave, depending on the needs of each one, and according to the spiritual state each one is in. All the services of the Church are arranged like this.

What comes first, apart from this, is the issue of perfection, the fact that perfection is an unending upward movement. It is very significant that it is movement without end."

This is why we perform sacred memorial services.

"The memorial service is an expression of the love of the living who pray for the departed. Yes, the Church prays that all its members may be saved. We say: 'Give rest in the land of the living...' In the prayers we pray that he may attain to sanctity. That is what

we say: 'Give rest with Thy saints...' What does this mean? That he may become a saint, that is what we are praying. But whether this happens right now, or whether it happens after fifty years, or in a century's time, that is another matter."

We perform memorial services for all the departed, saints and sinners, and we offer *kollyva* (boiled wheat) for them all. However, we say a different prayer for each one. In the case of saints, we ask for their intercessions and we pray that they may acquire more glory, and for sinners we ask that their repentance may be completed.

"We have *kollyva* for everyone. We have *kollyva* at memorial services and for the dead: friends, relatives, acquaintances and so on. But there is also *kollyva* for the saints. There is even *kollyva* for the All-Holy Mother of God, with appropriate prayers. *Kollyva* is not only for non-saints; it is for saints as well.

Of course we don't say the same prayer. Why don't we say the same prayer? On that issue, too, you should look at the writings of Symeon the New Theologian on the subject of prayer. There are some fine homilies in which he says that one cannot pray at random. When one prays, one should pray with scientific precision. Prayer is not throwaway words that we fling into the void, hoping that we might perhaps accomplish something."

Prayer for the departed is essential, because there is some improvement and progress in the intermediate state of souls for those who have already at least entered the stage of repentance.

"After death there is no repentance, but after death there is perfecting of repentance. These are two different things. Repentance begins here and ends there. It continues up until glorification. That's how it is. This is the experience of the saints."

"Because there is this teaching about eternal progress in the Fathers of the Church, you will also find scattered references in the Fathers to the fact that after death the individual progresses; he does not stop progressing. Repentance is one thing and continuing progress is another: they are not the same thing.

According to the Fathers, there is no repentance for the unrepentant, since they do not repent in this life. So repentance is here,

but because someone repents here it does not mean that he jumps immediately from repentance to perfection. He does not make a jump, he does not leap to perfection, but there is improvement."

"Anyway, an intermediate state of souls appeared in Orthodox dogmatics. The intermediate state means that they await the judgment; the one who is damned knows that he will be condemned, and the one who will be saved has this consolation. This intermediate state exists.

Now, there ought to have been research to see from where certain Fathers of the Church derive this intermediate state, which also exists in the experience of the Church. We also have the death of infants, and sometimes people see those children studying, so to speak, somewhere and preparing, as it were, for Paradise... In other words, there is school for those who need school.

Anyway, what is clear is that after death there is some progress. Those numbered among the saints, of course, advance continuously from glory to glory and there is progress for ever. There is no doubt about this, because perfection is unending; there is perfection without end.

Even in Dionysios the Areopagite, if we read him carefully, we see that the angels, too, are continuously made perfect, even there: Thrones, Powers, Angels, Cherubim, Seraphim. In any event, the angels are perfected. Indeed, there is a strong tradition that even the Mother of God is perfected; hence the glorified are perfected.

What happens to those who have not reached glorification, apart from the damned, for whom there is no repentance after death? For those who are hardened it seems that there is no repentance after death, because they are hardened. For the others, however, it seems that, since they were in a state of repentance when they died, they too will be placed in Paradise – not immediately, as we pray, because here we pray that it may happen at once. We say 'Place him in Paradise'; we don't say, 'In due course, place...' or 'At the Second Coming, place...' We say, 'Place...' now. Well, from this, from the whole funeral service, the teaching that we referred to at the beginning is clearly evident. Anyway, the view exists that there is progress even after death."

It is also possible for the non-Christian to know Christ after death.

"It is possible even for someone who is outside the tradition, if he has a strong positive response to God's energy, to go beyond the state of virtue and reach something higher. Such an individual can be taught Christianity after death, since he now sees the uncreated energy of God, and since he is receptive. Instead of remaining hard-hearted, he may be capable of progress and become a follower of Christ after death, as happened when Christ descended into Hades and all who were prepared believed, and they are now numbered among the saints."

The Westerners did not correctly interpret this patristic teaching about perfecting repentance after death through the prayer of the Church, and they turned it into a heretical teaching about purifying fire: that sinners have to be punished by created fire and afterwards to be saved. For our holy Fathers, purification is accomplished by the uncreated grace of God, which cleanses the human being through the prayer of the Church.

"The Franks take the patristic texts and read there about progress after death, and they take this progress after death to be purifying fire. Why? Because the Fathers say that the human being continues to be purified and illuminated, so that he will reach glorification, even after death.

Where God is Light, He is also fire. As fire He purifies man, just like fire purifies gold. It melts the gold, so that it is cleansed from impurities and becomes bright, beautiful and pure. There are some similarities of this kind between gold (and various other materials) and the purification accomplished in man after death. As someone repents here, it does not mean that, by repenting, he has passed through the stage of purification, because to pass through the stage of purification there has to be purification of the nous."

"The Franks took the patristic texts and were unable to discern things correctly. So they made the uncreated fire created, and they interpreted progress as being punishment by God, to pay for their sins. They were Christian entrepreneurs and they perceived Christianity as a business: you get a reward for everything you do."

3. Paradise and Hell

Christ revealed to us that He will come at His Second Coming to judge the living and the dead. There is a well-known passage in Holy Scripture about the future Judgment, in which He will separate human beings, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and after an exchange of words, the righteous will go *"into eternal life"* and the sinners *"into everlasting punishment"* (Matt. 25:46). In the Creed we confess, *"And He shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead".*

Before the Second Judgment the bodies of human beings will be resurrected. The first and second resurrections were mentioned earlier. The first resurrection is experienced through Baptism and Holy Communion, and the second resurrection is after Christ's Second Coming, so that the whole human being may live *'eternal well-being'* or *'eternal distress'.*

The iconography of the Second Coming of Christ shows what Paradise is and what Hell is.

> "Please go and find the icon of the Second Coming, and you will see that around Christ are those who are in Paradise. They are in a golden light; the light surrounding them is golden. This same golden light, as it gets further away from Christ, begins to change colour, and gradually, the further away it goes, it turns from gold to red; and in the red light are the damned. The saved see Christ in a golden colour, and the damned also see Christ from a distance, but they see the light of Christ as red, because for the former it is the glory of God and for the latter it is the eternal fire, outer darkness and *'the consuming fire'.*
>
> From this point of view, therefore, we Orthodox agree with the most liberal people in the world. No message can be more liberal than that of the Fathers of the Church, who not only stress that,

'Son, we'll all go to the same place', as an old lady told me, but also emphasise that God loves everyone equally: the damned and the saved, the glorified and the saints, angels and devils, good and bad, prostitutes and chaste...God loves all human beings equally, He loves everyone without distinction. From God's point of view, God saves everyone, He wants the salvation of all human beings, and He has preordained salvation for all.

How do we know this? Because even Hell is salvation (the human being is preserved) and Hell is a way of making perfect, but it is Hell and not Paradise. Because the one who is damned is incapable of progress, he is unable to accept progress towards perfection. Why? Because his conscience has been hardened, his heart has grown hard. He remains so egoistic and self-centred that his personality cannot develop from selfishness to unselfishness. Since he cannot develop any more, he is perfected in his selfishness. Even Hell is evil for him. Although it is not punishment from God's point of view, it is punishment from the human point of view.

In other words, the man has remained uncured. Why? Because his heart needed to be cured, his heart or his nous was sick, and they did not receive treatment. But where does this treatment begin, how does it take place and how does a human being secure it? In the Orthodox experience, treatment begins here in this world."

In the Western tradition about Paradise and Hell, we see views that differ from the Orthodox teaching.

"Augustine's teachings about absolute predestination, Hell and Paradise were based on those perceptions that he had, his legalistic views about the Fall of man and sin, combined with his Neoplatonic perception of Paradise. He introduced into Christianity the idea that Hell is the subterranean regions underneath the earth, where people go to be punished. Paradise is outer space.

In those days they believed that things that were immutable were beyond the heavenly bodies, where there is no movement and no development, and that here on earth is the place of testing. So if we are good boys and girls we shall go to Paradise above the stars and the sky; and if we are bad we shall go under the earth to be punished in the subterranean regions."

Paradise in the Western tradition was connected with the soul's happiness and the satisfaction of its desires.

> "In the Orthodox tradition there is nothing like this. Why? Because man's destiny is not happiness; it is not satisfaction of his desires. The Fathers do not teach that God will become man's possession, or that man can use God – let alone his fellow human being – for his own happiness.
>
> The capitalistic foundations that exist within the philosophy of mediaeval feudalism originate from Augustine, but mainly from the ancient Greeks. The teaching about the pursuit of happiness (eudemonism) started from the ancient Greeks, from Plato and Aristotle, with some opposition from the Stoics and the Epicureans. In the Christian tradition of the West, however, Aristotle and Plato prevailed. These elements do not exist in patristic theology."

Since the righteous in Paradise will live "ever-moving stability" and "stationary motion", whereas in Hell there will be "cessation of progress", the static happiness of Western Paradise resembles the Orthodox teaching on Hell.

> "I jokingly told the Latins that the Latin tradition's perceptions of Paradise are exactly the Orthodox perceptions of Hell. I have even written, by way of a joke, that their Paradise is Hell for us: this satisfaction of desires and the cessation of progress.
>
> In our own tradition, the human being is eternally advancing to higher stages of perfection. For us history never stops. There is the history of the saints and there is also the eternal history of man. The fact that Christ was resurrected with His Body and that Christ is fully human until now and for ever and ever means that Christ, His Body and His human nature, is part of history. Has His Body not acted continually until this day? There has been a succession of actions; the energies of the Body of Christ have not ceased. So the Body of Christ is an inseparable part of history, which is a guarantee that history is eternal. History will not come to a halt; although a number of theologians who believe in Plato say nowadays that history will cease. No, history will not come to a halt. Why will history not cease? Because the Body with which Christ was resurrected will

exist for ever, and we shall be resurrected with bodies. We shall not be merely souls in Paradise. We shall be complete human beings."

Then the Westerners speak about Paradise and Hell from the standpoint of justice. This is a sociological interpretation of eternal life.

"Justice will triumph in the next life. The Westerners have even written poems about these issues. We have the poems of Dante and we also have the poems of John Milton, the great Anglo-Saxon poet of the Calvinist tradition, who stimulates the appetite with the idea of bad boys being punished in the next life.

This perception of Hell followed on from the policing of society, and was funded by priests, bishops, theologians, from the literary activity of these people. Of course, the essential purpose of Christianity, based on these foundations, was first of all to intimidate the serfs, who if they were not afraid of the aristocracy's police, should at least fear religion and comply with the rules of good behaviour in the class to which each belonged, so that this society of feudal Europe would develop.

Dante, of course, was a Frank from Florence. The Franks of Italy at that period were oppressors of the serfs.

This Frankish theology, the theology of the Calvinists and English theology came from feudalistic moulds and was useful for the rich classes, so that that could restrain those unruly children who were members of an advanced society.

Italian society after the Protestant revolt against Rome was certainly different from Papal society, due to the development of the first signs of urban democracy, which then dominated in Europe and was transferred to America. Within this framework of the Middle Ages and the Protestant Reformation the idea took shape that this dogma of life after death is an essential and inseparable element of religion."

In the West the view also developed that Paradise is for someone to see God, whereas Hell is the absence of the divine vision, or even the absence of God. Hell, however, is not the absence of God, but the presence of God as fire.

"In parallel with those theories of Dante, which come from the Frankish tradition and, although they do not exactly have Augustine as their source, have their roots in Augustine, there were also those mediaeval theories in combination with the Frankish theories about Hell and Paradise, which are so nicely expressed in the scholastic theologians, in Dante, and in more recent writers, in their works. One sees the mediaeval Frankish perception of Paradise and Hell vividly portrayed.

According to this perception, Paradise means seeing God, the divine vision is Paradise, and Hell is the absence of divine vision. To this absence of the vision of God are added 'embellishments' and the created fires of Hell. There are some terrible images of the torments to Hell to be found in Dante, Milton and James Joyce, who describe the Western idea of Hell. I well remember, when I was at the Papal high school, that every year they used to describe Hell in order to frighten the pupils; they used to describe Hell in that way. It was quite an art on the part of the teachers – the Priests – to terrify the children with these images of Hell."

The teaching of the Fathers of the Church about Paradise and Hell coincides with a Jewish interpretation of Paradise and Hell. Latins and Protestants differ from one another mainly with regard to Hell.

"The patristic description is correct. It also happens to be identical with the description given by a respectable number of Jewish theologians. According to this description, God Himself is Hell and Paradise. That is the first element on which this theology is based. The second element is that there is no similarity at all between this God, Who is Paradise and Hell, and the created world. This is also the foundation of the Jewish interpretation of the Old Testament and the patristic interpretation of the Old and New Testaments. On these two points, Jewish theology and Orthodox patristic theology are absolutely identical.

Precisely here lies the most fundamental difference from the Protestant tradition and the Franco-Latin tradition, which followed Augustine. In the Protestant traditions and the Latin tradition there is a clear separation between Hell and Paradise. Paradise and Hell are different things.

Everyone agrees that Paradise is God Himself, and the Jews too agree with us on this point. But there are two views on the subject of Hell. From one point of view, all the Papal Christians and Protestants agree that Hell is deprivation of the vision of God. In other words, man does not see God in Hell. However, although they agree on the fact that the damned do not see God - all Protestants and Papal Christians agree on that - some of them, apart from the damned not seeing God, also add something to this. Some stop at this point and simply say that Hell means that man does not see God and nothing else. This is Hell: the fact that man does not see God and, as he does not see God, he is not blissful and happy. For that reason, because he is deprived of God, he is damned.

To this certain Protestants and Papal Christians in history added that those in Hell, apart from not seeing God, will be surrounded by fire and will be roasted. They will be cooked. If you want to see exactly what they believed about these things in the Middle Ages, I would urge you - sorry, encourage you - to read Dante's *Divine Comedy*."

These views, and many others connected with the created fire of Hell - the cauldrons, the created flames, and so on - are alien to the Orthodox patristic tradition. The Orthodox icon of the Second Coming of Christ shows Light coming from God's throne that illuminates the righteous; and from the same throne of God issues the river of fire, which burns up sinners.

This means that both the Light that illumines the just and the fire that burns sinners come from God and are uncreated. The Light that shines on the righteous is the illuminating energy of God, and the fire that burns sinners is the burning energy of God. The Light does not burn the righteous, and the fire brings no light to the sinners. Participation in one or the other is connected to the fact that the righteous during their lives were at the stage of illumination of the nous and glorification, so the grace of God acted as Light, whereas the sinners had not been purified and experienced the grace of God as fire.

"The glory of God in Holy Scripture is described by opposites: light - dark cloud, and fire - darkness, in parallel with glory - cloud, and lightning - smoke. The friends of God see God in light - dark

cloud or in glory - cloud, whereas the selfish see God the Judge as lightning - smoke or fire - darkness."

Holy Scripture uses the words 'light' and 'dark cloud' to describe the state of the just, and the words 'fire' and 'darkness' to describe the state of sinners. We know, however, that the light is different from the dark cloud that covers the light. And fire is the opposite of darkness, because fire chases away darkness and illuminates the surroundings.

This shows that there are no created words to express uncreated reality absolutely. The eternal divine Light and the eternal fire are uncreated. They are the energy of God that is experienced by human beings as illuminating or burning energy, depending on their spiritual state.

"All human beings will see the glory of God, and from this point of view they have the same end. Everyone will certain see the glory of God, the difference being that, whereas the saved will see the glory of God as sweetest Light without evening, the damned will see the same glory of God as consuming fire, as fire that will burn them. It is a true and predictable fact that we shall all see the glory of God. Seeing God, that is to say, His glory and His Light, is something that will happen whether we want it or not. The experience of this Light, however, will be different for the two categories.

The work of the Church and the priests is not to help us to see this glory, because that will happen in any case. The work of the Church centres on how each one will see God. Not on whether he will see God. In other words, the task of the Church is to preach to people that the true God exists, that God is revealed either as Light or as consuming fire, and that at the Second Coming of Christ all of us will see God. And it must prepare its members so that they see God not as fire but as Light."

"The Church does not send anyone to Paradise or to Hell, but it prepares the faithful for the vision of Christ in glory, which everyone will have. God loves the damned as much as the saints. He wants all to be cured, but not all accept the cure that He offers."

Paradise and Hell do not exist from the point of view of God, but from the point of view of human beings. God will love everyone equally. He will send His grace to all, in the same way as He *"makes*

His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matt. 5:45). But everyone will not accept God's grace in the same way. Some will see God as Light and others as fire. The same will happen as with Holy Communion. For those who prepare themselves appropriately, Holy Communion is "for eternal life", but for those who have not been purified, Holy Communion is "for judgment and condemnation".

"Paradise and Hell are the same thing. What is Paradise? Seeing God, seeing the glory of God. And seeing all created things within the glory of God. 'Heaven and earth are full of Your glory.' That one will see this glory of God, which pervades and permeates the universe. Seeing this is Paradise. If, however, you see this without being prepared, without having love, you see the same glory of God, and instead of seeing the glory you see *'a consuming fire'*. Because Hell is God Himself. There is no difference. What is the difference? Someone who is suitably prepared sees God as glory, and someone else, who is unprepared, who does not have repentance and does not have divine vision, also sees God, but sees Him as *'a consuming fire'*. This is the fire of Hell.

Thus Paradise and Hell are not two different places. Nor does the priest issue tickets for Paradise. Because we shall all see the glory of God, regardless of priests and bishops. The work of the priest, the bishop, the clergy and spiritual fathers is to cure us, so that, when we see the glory, we shall see Light, Light, Light, and not fire. This therapeutic treatment is their work. It is not the work of priests to celebrate the Mysteries and let God cure people in the next life.

It is like going to the doctor and telling him that we have a pain somewhere, and the doctor reads a prayer that we may get well in the next life. Is it there that the doctor will cure us? No. The Fathers say that we must be cured here. After death 'there is no repentance'. It takes place now. We shall either be cured here or not at all. When you go there, you will see God as fire, which is a form of salvation, because the human being will be preserved; all the same, it is not glorification."

"We have said in other classes that, according to the Fathers of the Church, Paradise and Hell are the same thing. Paradise is the

glory of God and Hell is the glory of God, but the glorified see the glory as glory and the damned see the same glory as eternal fire and outer darkness. Eternal fire and outer darkness. The same light not only illuminates but also burns. It is both *'a consuming fire'* and light that enlightens *'every man coming into the world'* (John 1:9)."

The difference is as follows. When someone reaches the point of seeing the glory of God after having gone through purification of the heart and reaching illumination, this illuminated human being sees the glory of God as Light. But when someone who has not reached illumination and does not have illumination within him sees this Light, he sees it as consuming fire. Instead of seeing God as Light, he sees God as consuming fire."

"We know that if an Orthodox Christian who does not prepare himself correctly and reaches the point that his heart is hardened, he will see God as a consuming fire."

"Contrary to Augustine's ideas about Paradise and Hell, according to the other Fathers of the Church in both East and West, Hell and Paradise are the same thing. There is no difference at all. When someone sees God's glory with unselfish love, he sees God as Paradise, and this is Paradise.

"When this same divine vision is seen by someone selfish, who has not learnt to love and has not attained to the love that *'seeks not its own'*, he too sees the glory of God, but he sees it as *'eternal fire'* and *'outer darkness'*.

That is why Gregory Palamas mocked Barlaam, saying: 'What do you mean by negative theology?' The greatest negative theologian is the devil, because he sees the glory of God as darkness and as fire. Darkness and fire are opposites, because they refer to God, Who is indescribable. The Fathers use opposites when they speak about God. They call Him light, but He is also dark cloud. He is neither light nor dark cloud, because He transcends all the categories of human thought. For that reason there is no concept or word that can convey the reality of God to man."

This means that we have to be cured in order to see God as Light. This is the work of the Church.

"The uncreated glory, which Christ has by nature from the Father, is Paradise for those whose self-centred and selfish love has been cured and transformed into unselfish love. However, the same glory is uncreated eternal fire and Hell for those who have chosen to remain uncured in their selfishness."

4. The Cure of Man

Unfortunately many today see the Church from an ethical, social and religious perspective: that people should become moral, good citizens and parents, and perform their religious duties well, so that they may live well here but also propitiate God after death and win Paradise.

> "The view has become prevalent that the aim of theology certainly includes therapeutic treatment, but with regard to the life to come. In other words, we practise a therapeutic method today, but the results of the treatment will be revealed after death, or at the hour of death. So we behave ourselves now, we keep the commandments and participate in purification, in the sense that we avoid sins – and usually in Greece they avoid 'particular' sins with a very specific meaning – and we reach the point of death. And since we are 'good boys and girls' and moral, we go to Paradise, as we are rewarded for our good behaviour during this life."

However, man's ailing personality needs to be cured. The heart must be purified and the nous illumined. The organ of the nous is a lens that has been darkened and obscured. It needs to be cleaned and illuminated now, so that it can work well in this life and will also be able to see the Light of God at the Second Coming. Then God will be Light for the human being.

> "If the light were suddenly to be revealed to someone without him being prepared, and without his lens having been polished, instead of seeing God as Light, he would see Him as fire. Someone who is blind and lives all his life in darkness – actually, his eyes are normal, but they are not used to seeing light, so essentially the man is blind – if we suddenly take him outside at midday in Greece, in the summer when there are no clouds in the sky, his abrupt exposure to the sun's rays and facing the sun in this way could ruin his eyes.

They will inevitably suffer harm and probably, instead of seeing, the man will end up being blind for the rest of his life.

For that reason he needs gradually to train and get his eyes accustomed, and once they are accustomed, he can go for walks in the sun. If anyone ever wants to go blind, let him put sellotape on his eyes to force them to stay open, and let him lie on his back looking up at the sun in the middle of the day, in an atmosphere with low barometric pressure. You will see that in a few minutes his eyes will be ruined. Seeing the sun is a good thing, but at the same time it is dangerous. The sun is good, but the sun can also be bad, depending on the use one makes of it."

Christ became incarnate. He assumed the whole of human nature in order to cure it, because, according to St Gregory the Theologian, "What is not assumed is not cured." Baptism, Chrismation and the Divine Eucharist contribute to purification, illumination and glorification, provided, of course, that man responds to God's action with his own co-operation. The clergy are physicians who give therapeutic treatment using the method of hesychasm and the Mysteries of the Church. We attach great importance to this. The Church is really a spiritual hospital. In this context we can speak about therapeutic treatment.

Hesychasm is not a later development that was expounded by St Symeon the New Theologian and the Fathers of the 13th and 14th centuries. It is the authentic tradition of the saints, by means of which we participate worthily in the Mysteries of the Church.

"The essence of this tradition was the ascetic tradition of the Fathers that had been preserved down through the centuries, particularly in the monasteries, and mainly after Symeon the New Theologian, who brought about a tremendous revolution in his era. It seems to me that there is a very great need for the same revolution to be repeated today.

For that reason it is a distortion of historical reality to talk about 'the Great Fathers of the Church', and to separate them from the neptic Fathers, and to talk about the latter as though they were something different from the other Fathers. All the Fathers were neptic; they practised asceticism. When the Apostle Paul says, *'Be*

watchful in all things...' (2 Tim. 4:5) he is not referring only to a few monks; he means all Christians. Today when one reads the Apostle Paul and Holy Scripture, it has now been proved that this ascetic tradition is the essence of Holy Scripture."

The Westerners study hesychasm from the viewpoint of Eastern (non-Christian) mysticism. The genuine hesychasm of the Fathers, however, aims to cure the whole human being, made up of soul and body, and leads him to communion with God, not to some sort of abstract state. It has no connection at all with Eastern mysticism, which aims at the soul's departure from the body and its entry into the supra-personal absolute.

"Hesychast theologians like Gregory Palamas sometimes expressed these views, not analytically, but in the form of short pithy sayings. Western theologians have taken the sayings of the hesychast Fathers and have drawn the conclusion that these 'mystics' of the East do not respect Holy Scripture as the basis of the faith, and do not attach very much importance to the incarnation or the Mysteries of the Church. In my opinion, anyone who bears in mind these things that we have been discussing realises that the purpose of the Mysteries is illumination and glorification."

The hesychastic tradition is closely connected with the sacramental life of the Church and the two together lead man to purification, illumination and glorification. Then empirical dogmatics is experienced in practice. Dogma becomes experience.

This hesychastic tradition, in combination with initiation into the mysteries of the Church – its sacramental life – preserved the Orthodox in the difficult days of their servitude.

"In the era of the destruction of Byzantium the Church was highly successful. The Church was flourishing when the state fell. Everywhere in those days there were bishops who had noetic prayer, because hesychasm predominated. That was why the nation was saved. If there had not been hesychast Bishops under Turkish domination, the phenomenon of the New Martyrs and the Muslims who became Orthodox and then went to their martyrdom would not have been so prevalent. We would all be Muslims now, as happened with

the Orthodox Christians in the Middle East, who have been reduced to a mere handful. In the area of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, which ruled the Holy Mountain, many Orthodox remained. All the Balkan states are Orthodox."

In conclusion, the Orthodox Church is a real hospital that helps man to get rid of self-love and acquire love for God and for other people, to attain unselfish love. Someone who acquires eyes capable of seeing God will see God's glory as Light, and for him that will be Paradise and the glory and rule (*vasileia*) of God. This shows that the Church is not a simple religion, nor a social, moral and philanthropic system. It is the hope of the present world and the world to come.

Central Points in the Teaching of Fr. John Romanides

The teaching of Fr. John Romanides is in accord with the teaching of the Fathers of the Church, which he presented in a contemporary way to his students, his audiences and those to whom he spoke, as well as through his writings. Anyone who met him and conversed with him for a few minutes could go away with some concentrated teaching. He had the ability to convey the essence of his teaching concisely and simply in a very short time.

The ten central points of his teaching, as I perceive them, are set out below.

1. The God of the Orthodox Church is the God of revelation, the God Who revealed Himself to the Prophets, Apostles and saints of every age, who are described as glorified and are friends of God. The God of the Church is not the God of philosophers and speculative thinkers, but the God of our Fathers. He is revealed to the glorified, to those in a high enough spiritual state to be aware of communion with Him.

This spiritual state is called theoria; those who behold God see Him in the Light of His glory. This vision is communion, communion offers knowledge, and this knowledge is above human knowledge. During theoria, the one who is glorified has no concepts and participates in the Light. After theoria, however, he records his experience in words and images that he takes from his surroundings. God is Light, the saints live within the Light, and subsequently they describe this uncreated reality in terms of created reality. The word 'uncreated' means 'not made', 'not created'. There is a great difference between what is uncreated and what is created, and the glorified perceive this in the course of their experience of seeing God.

The knowledge of God, which is given with uncreated words, is passed on with created words, concepts and images in order, on the one hand, to instruct the faithful to travel the path to glorification and, on the other hand, to confront heretics. Thus the dogmas of the Local and Ecumenical Councils were drawn up. The dogma of the Holy Trinity is not the same thing as the mystery of the Holy Trinity.

Consequently the God of the Church is not the God of speculative thinkers or philosophers, but the God of our Fathers.

2. Both the Old Testament and the New Testament refer to the Triune God: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Not only does the New Testament speak of God the Holy Trinity, but so does the Old Testament. The Persons of the Holy Trinity have a common essence-nature and particular hypostatic properties, which are the 'unbegottenness' of the Father, the 'begottenness' of the Son and the 'procession' of the Holy Spirit.

God transcends all the categories of human and created existence. He is visible and invisible, known and unknown, describable and indescribable, so personalistic categories cannot be applied to Him.

Thus God reveals Himself to man while concealing Himself, but also hides while manifesting Himself. God is a mystery. He is not merely a 'person', in the sense that we assign to the concept of 'person' in our anthropomorphic expressions; He is something beyond this. In the state of divine vision, all concepts cease and God is partaken of as hypostatic Light.

Within the Holy Trinity there are things that are common and others that are incommunicable. The essence, nature, energy and glory are common, whereas unbegottenness, begottenness and procession are incommunicable. The Father shares His essence with the Son by generation and He shares His essence with the Holy Spirit (through the Word) by procession. Thus within the Triune God there is communion of nature-essence and energy, but not communion of Persons. There is mutual interpenetration between the Persons, but not communion of Persons, as the incommunicable properties are not shared.

Knowledge of the Triune God comes about during the experience of beholding God, when God is seen as Light, through the Light and in the Light. The Light is God's uncreated energy.

3. The God Who reveals Himself to the Prophets of the Old Testament is the unincarnate Word, the Angel of Great Counsel, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. A clear distinction is made in the Old Testament between the Angel of Great Counsel (the uncreated Word) and created angels. The Prophets in the Old Testament see the Father through the unincarnate Word in the Holy Spirit. In this sense the Triune God is revealed in the Old Testament.

In the New Testament the uncreated Word is revealed in the flesh, as He takes human nature from His All-Holy Mother. The unincarnate word becomes incarnate; the Angel of Great Counsel becomes Christ, which means Messiah in Hebrew. The word 'Christ' signifies that the human nature was anointed by God. God Himself (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) anointed the human nature. In the New Testament we see the Father through Christ in the Holy Spirit. When Philip said to Christ, *"Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us"*, Christ replied, *"Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"* (John 14:8-9).

4. God created the world and man is His most perfect creation. God is uncreated, whereas the world is created. This means that it has a specific beginning, it is subject to corruption and it has an end. The human soul is a creation of God, and as it is created it ought to have an end. However, the soul does not have an end because God willed differently. Man's soul is immortal according to grace and not according to nature. So there is no distinction in man between a soul that is immortal by nature and a body that is mortal by nature. The whole human being, consisting of soul and body, is a positive creation of God and is called to live eternally with Him.

Adam and Eve had souls and bodies, but also the grace of God. This does not mean that they were made up of three parts, because human beings have a body and a soul, but that real human beings also have God's grace. Adam and Eve in Paradise were the most natural human beings.

God made man in His image and likeness. The actual image of the invisible God is the Word, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. Man is not the image of God but is in the image of God, that is to say, in

the image of the Word. Man is in the likeness of God when he attains to participation in the glory of God. The original state of man, when he was created in God's image and in His likeness, also included communion with the Holy Spirit, as "the Spirit Who renders incorruptible makes man in God's image and likeness". Thus the authentic human being is someone who lives in Christ and in the Holy Spirit, within the Light and glory of God.

This is why man is not a person in the image of the Triune God, but is the image of the Word, because there is no analogy between God and man, between what is uncreated and what is created. The only bridge between created and uncreated is the God-man Christ and His friends. The Fathers did not develop particularly the theory of man as person, because they knew that man is in the image of God and he must attain to being in his likeness, to glorification-*theosis*. For that reason they did not say that man is a person, but that all human beings have a noetic faculty, which ought to be activated, so that they reach glorification and become glorified.

5. The Fall of man is the loss of God's glory, according to the words of the Apostle Paul: *'All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"* (Rom. 3:23). Death was not created by God, but came by the advice of the devil, and as a result of man's departure from the glory of God. The inheritance of ancestral sin is not the inheritance of guilt, but the inheritance of the results of man's departure from God, which are death.

What exactly happened with regard to ancestral sin is clear from the teaching of the Fathers about man. According to this, the human soul has two parallel energies: the noetic faculty and the rational faculty. The noetic faculty (nous) was darkened by sin and ceased to be in communication with God. Through sin the 'wild beast' of death entered fallen man and threatens his life. There is spiritual and physical death. Thus man lost the remembrance of God and lives by his rational faculty and imagination.

The Prophets and the righteous in the Old Testament cleansed their heart from passions and their nous was illuminated by the grace of God. They reached theoria and saw the glory of God. We see this clearly in the Prophet Moses. For that reason, when St Gregory of

Nyssa was going to present the model of the perfect human being, he described Moses.

The Prophets and the righteous in the Old Testament are friends of God. They were reconciled with God and arrived at participation in His glory; but they could not overcome death, so they went down into Hades. Through the vision of God that they experienced, they overcame spiritual death, though only temporarily, but they could not conquer physical death. Through Christ's descent into Hades, He liberated His friends from the dominion of death.

6. The unincarnate Word of the Old Testament took flesh. He assumed the passible and mortal aspects of human nature, without sin, in order to conquer death in His body and thus to deliver human beings from the power of death – not from the wrath of God, as the Franco-Latins assert.

Christ taught the people in parables and He revealed the mysteries of the glory and rule (*vasileia*) of God to the Disciples, who had forsaken everything and followed Him. Some of these He led into the glory and rule of God, the uncreated Light of the divinity, as happened on Mount Tabor.

The mystery of the Cross and Resurrection of Christ frees the glorified from sin, the devil and death. The mystery of the Cross was also active in the Old Testament, because through it the Prophets and the righteous became His friends. However, it did not release them from the domination of death. This came about through the historical event of the Crucifixion and the Resurrection of Christ, and their life in the Church.

The stages of spiritual perfection – purification, illumination and glorification – are a common characteristic of both the Old and New Testaments. Because the Protestants rejected monasticism and adopted Calvin's theories of absolute predestination and Luther's teaching on man's salvation through faith alone, and because they also rejected the Franco-Latins' theories about merits and purifying fire, they inveighed against purification, illumination and glorification as allegedly originating from the idolaters.

However, the teaching about purification, illumination and glorification, in a different sense from that given by the Neoplatonists to these

terms, is the common tradition of the Prophets, Apostles and saints as a therapeutic method and a method of knowing God. This is Orthodox asceticism.

7. The Church also existed in the Old Testament as communion of the righteous and the Prophets with the Angel of Great Counsel. With the incarnation of Christ, however, the Church becomes His body and He becomes its Head. This is *"all truth"*, which the Holy Spirit revealed to the Apostles on the day of Pentecost. Beyond this there is no other truth.

In the Old Testament the uncreated grace of God is "indivisibly divided among divided beings" and "is multiplied without becoming many". In the New Testament this also happens with the theanthropic body of Christ, which He assumed from the All-Holy Virgin, and it became a source of God's uncreated grace. Thus in the life of the Church the Body of Christ is also divided indivisibly among divided beings and multiplied without becoming many. This is the fullness of truth and there is nothing else beyond this. Within the Church we know and live the truth and Christ.

The Church in the New Testament is the Body of Christ, which is united with Christ, the Head. It does not symbolise the Holy Trinity. Of course, the glorified know the Father through Christ and have communion with the Holy Spirit. They participate in the uncreated energy of God, but they do not share in the Persons of the Holy Trinity.

Through Holy Baptism and Holy Chrismation the Christian becomes the temple of the Holy Spirit, once the noetic faculty of the soul is activated and noetic prayer begins, and through the Divine Eucharist he partakes of the Body and Blood of Christ. Then he tastes the first resurrection. The Divine Eucharist, prayer and reading Holy Scripture, which is analysed by Prophets, are central to ecclesiastical life. Thus we have the Divine Eucharist and the rule of prayer and services, as found in the *Great Prayer Book* and the decisions of the Ecumenical and Local Councils. The Divine Eucharist is inseparably linked with the other Mysteries and the divine services, but also with the Orthodox dogmas and the Orthodox hesychasm that they presuppose.

The Church, as the Body of Christ, cures man through the Mysteries and the therapeutic method of the hesychastic tradition. It brings

him back to Adam's state in Paradise and lifts him even higher, as it unites him with the God-man Christ and conquers death. In Paradise Adam was in the state of illumination of the nous and glorification. After the Fall he lost contact with God and his nous was darkened. As a consequence, the nous was identified with the rational faculty, the passions and the surroundings. The restoration of human nature should take place within the Church. The heart must be cleansed from passions, the nous must be illuminated, and man should reach glorification. This is what is meant by being cured. In this sense the Church is the spiritual therapeutic centre, the spiritual hospital.

Noetic prayer indicates that someone is a temple of the Holy Spirit and shares in Christ. Within the Church there is both rational worship and noetic worship. Noetic worship is offered without ceasing. The nous must be purified of every thought and in it only the 'single-thought prayer' should remain. One word should be there: the remembrance of God.

The Church has two aspects – one negative and one positive. The positive aspect is Christology: that it is the Body of Christ and a communion of glorification, as human nature was united with the divine nature in the Person of the Word and was glorified, "at the same time as it was assumed" "from the earliest moment of conception". The negative aspect is demonology, as it battles against the devil, sin and death, and cures man by delivering him from *"him who had the power of death, that is, the devil"* (Heb. 2:14). This is also clear from the work of Christ, Who came into the world *"that He might destroy the works of the devil"* (1 John 3:8), as the Gospels show. What is strange and surprising is that the more a Christian is aware of and experiences the negative aspect of the Church – in other words, the more he fights against the devil and conquers him in Christ – the more he experiences the positive aspect of the Church, Christology. He senses the love of Christ and is united with Him. This is essentially what is implied by the degrees of the spiritual life: purification, illumination and glorification. The struggle against the devil, of course, is waged in Christ.

Warfare against the devil is continuous at every stage of the spiritual life. The devil fights each one according to his spiritual level. The glorified, however, discern his wiles, because their nous is illumined by the grace of God. Even when the devil appears *"as an angel of light"*

(cf. 2 Cor. 11:14), the glorified realise that this light is not experienced through union, as happens with the uncreated Light, but in conjunction, as the created light of the devil is alongside man and outside him.

As the Christian strives in Christ and lives within the Church, he progresses from being in God's image to being in His likeness, from selfish love to unselfish love. He is changed from a servant into a hired worker, and into a friend of Christ. He lives the mystery of Christ's Cross and Resurrection as the mystery of his reconciliation with God, and becomes a temple of the Holy Spirit. Then he becomes a true theologian and can carry out the work of a spiritual father.

Heresy is a denial of the methodology for knowing God. It replaces purification, illumination and glorification with speculation and moralism, so it produces distorted results. Anyone who speculates about God will necessarily end up with mistaken ideas about God and construct his own God in accordance with his conjectures and imagination. Such a god is non-existent.

The glorified do not accept speculation in Orthodox theology or moralism in practical life. Instead of Western speculation and moralism they accept hesychasm. Dogma is the formulation of the revelation and is connected with asceticism, which leads man to the revelation.

8. Eschatological life is not life after death and after the Second Coming of Christ. It is life in Christ, as Christ, Who is *"the first and the last"*, has come into the world. The glory and rule (*vasileia*) of God has entered the world and history, and man can share in it. This means that those who behold God share from now in the glory and rule of God and are not simply waiting for the future. This is the first resurrection and the second resurrection will follow after the resurrection of bodies, when God's glory and rule will be experienced by the whole human being, soul and body.

Participation in the glory and rule (*vasileia*) of God is participation in God's uncreated glory in the Light in the Person of the Word. The glory and rule of God is not a created reality but glorification, the vision of the divinity of Christ in His glorified flesh.

Everyone who sees God in the New Testament is a member of the Body of Christ. When he sees the uncreated Light invisibly and knows it without knowledge, he participates in the uncreated energy of God.

The vision of the Light comes from within him through glorification, but also from within the theanthropic Body of Christ, as he is a member of the Body of Christ.

9. Paradise and Hell exist from man's point of view but not from God's point of view. God will appear to all human beings. Some will see God as Light, since they have cleansed the noetic aspect of their souls and have acquired a self-revealing eye; this is Paradise. Others will see God as fire, and this is Hell. If someone sits in the sun and opens his eyes, which are unable to endure this sight, he will be blinded. This is Hell. In this sense God is said to be both light and fire, because He brings light to some and burns others.

When Christ spoke about Hell in His teaching, He used the words *"darkness"* and *"fire"*. However, darkness perceptible to the senses is not the same as fire, which gives light, and when there is fire there is no darkness. Thus Hell is neither fire nor darkness as we know them in created reality. Rather, it is the experience of uncreated Light as darkness, on account of man's infirmity. God did not make Hell, but man experiences God as Hell. Hell is not a created reality; it is God's uncreated grace that is experienced as consuming fire. God will love all human beings, the just and the unjust, but the unjust will not be able to understand God's love.

The saints in the glory and rule *(vasileia)* of God will continuously advance in participation in God's glory; there will not be a static state of happiness. The damned will be hardened and will participate in God as fire. There is no repentance after death, but there is progress in repentance. This means that, if someone begins to repent in this life, his repentance will be completed in the next life.

10. Through His incarnation Christ became man and entered history. The Church, as the Body of Christ, lives within history and sanctifies it. The saints, too, live in history, even after their death, as their relics prove. History will not be abolished at the Second Coming of Christ, but it will be transformed. Christ has human nature always united with the divinity in His Person, *"unconfusedly, immutably, indivisibly and inseparably"*. After the resurrection, human beings will have their own bodies, but they will be transformed. Thus history is not abolished, nor is there a post-historic era, but history is transformed.

The Church lives within time and history, and through the Fathers it adopted some elements from its surroundings to express revealed truth. It took elements from Jewish and Greek thought and from Roman culture and transformed them. In this way a particular culture was created, which is the spiritual garment of revealed truth. This is the Roman tradition. The basis of the Roman tradition is purification, illumination and glorification. This was expressed in a particular area through its cultural tradition, and is called Christian Roman theology, Christian Roman culture.

The early Church in both the West and the East had one single tradition and, most importantly, a single methodology for arriving at participation in God, which was expressed by purification, illumination and glorification. St Augustine was different from the other Western Fathers, because of his Neoplatonic and Manichaean background, and because he did not know Greek. The Frankish theologians in the court of Charlemagne made excessive use of the views of St Augustine; in fact, it is thought likely that they were pushed to do this by Alcuin, Charlemagne's royal theologian.

On the basis of these theories, at the Council of Frankfurt in 794 the Franks condemned the decisions of the Seventh Ecumenical Council, introduced the theory of eternal happiness in God, the methodology of conjecture to attain knowledge of God, and, by inference, rejected the method of purification, illumination and glorification. They abolished the distinction between essence and energy in God (*actus purus*) and brought in the theory of the knowledge of God's essence, the *filioque*, and so on.

These views were further analysed by theologians in the West: Anselm of Canterbury, Thomas Aquinas and other scholastic theologians, such as Barlaam. As a result another cultural tradition took shape, a different culture, which is the opposite of the Orthodox Roman tradition. The Western theologians actually reached the point of thinking that the Eastern Fathers had introduced various heresies into their theology, as they did not agree with their own views; the writings called *Contra Errores Graecorum* (*Against the Errors of the Greeks*) are well known.

The discussion and conflict between St Gregory Palamas, who represented the Orthodox Roman tradition, and Barlaam, who represented

Western scholastic theology, should be seen in this context. The Orthodox Church upheld the teaching of St Gregory Palamas through Councils, and condemned Barlaam and those like him.

These were the ten central views of Fr. John Romanides. It is significant that Fr. John arrived at this entire theology for many different reasons. The first is that he had inherited an oral Roman tradition from his parents. The second reason is that in America, where he lived, he knew the Western tradition, as expressed by Papal Christians and Protestants. In the dialogues in which he took part he became familiar with the spirit of Western Christianity. As a result, he looked for the core of Orthodox teaching in the Apostolic Fathers, the *Prayer Book* of the Church and its hesychastic tradition. Later he extended his search to include the Fathers of the Ecumenical Councils, St Symeon the New Theologian, St Gregory Palamas and the *Philokalia*. The third reason is that he studied in major academic centres of the Western world, such as the Holy Cross School of Theology in Boston, Yale University, Columbia University, St Vladimir's Theological Seminary in New York, the Theological Institute of St Sergius in Paris, Munich University, the Theological School in Athens and Harvard University, and he was acquainted with all the theological, social and cultural trends. At the same time, he taught the subject of dogmatics at the Holy Cross School of Theology in Boston, the Theological School in Thessaloniki, and the Balamand Theological School in Lebanon. The fourth reason is that he had an investigative spirit, and his first and subsequent theological articles, as well as his classic thesis on ancestral sin, should be seen in this perspective. The fifth reason is that he had exceptional intellectual qualities and a capacious nous – which is why he also received, as St Maximos says, the spiritual gift of theology – and also that he met Fathers who practised noetic prayer and had theoria of God, and humbly learnt from them.

The theology of Fr. John Romanides is prophetic, apostolic, patristic, in other words, ecclesiastical. He was very insistent on the subject of purification, illumination and glorification, which is the method of Orthodox theology. This method was used by the Prophets, Apostles and Fathers and produces results, as the holy relics show. At the same time, he was also insistent with regard to the Roman tradition, which

preserves the essence of revealed truth. This Roman tradition was altered by the Franco-Latin tradition.

Everything that has been mentioned is a brief reference to the memory of this great theologian of our era. As time passes he will take his rightful place in the spiritual firmament of our Church, because he was in accord with the spirit of the Orthodox patristic tradition and expressed its core.

May the memory of the late Fr. John Romanides, the teacher of hesychasm and the empirical dogmatic theology of the Orthodox Catholic Church be eternal.

Instead of an Epilogue
Funeral Oration for Fr. John Romanides

At this funeral service I am representing His Beatitude Archbishop Christodoulos of Athens and All Greece, who is unable to be present among us, in spite of his desire to be so. I bring his prayers for the repose of the soul of the ever-memorable Fr. John Romanides, who rendered great services to the Church of Greece by participating in inter-Orthodox and inter-Christian dialogues and meetings.

At the same time I am also here as Metropolitan of Nafpaktos and St Vlassios, because in recent years the ever-memorable Fr. John received his discharge from the Holy Archdiocese of America, where he used to serve, and was enrolled among the priests of my Holy Metropolis.

In both these capacities I am intensely aware of the weighty task of bidding farewell at his funeral to the ever-memorable Fr. John Romanides, professor in theological schools, teacher of the spiritual life, exponent of the Orthodox hesychastic tradition, and my beloved priest. However, I shall pluck up courage to complete my farewell.

The ever-memorable Fr. John Romanides was no ordinary personality. His colleagues will outline his work as a writer and teacher. What I can emphasise, however, is that he was a serious researcher and academic, an expert and teacher in the Orthodox tradition, who made a great contribution to the revival of theological literature, but who was first and foremost a sensitive human being. He had dedicated himself soul and body to the depth of Romanity, which for him was the essence of genuine spirituality that sets man free from self-love, the pursuit of happiness, and the manifestations of fallen humanity. He accomplished important work for the Church, theology and the nation. He represented Orthodox theology in America, in the theological schools in Lebanon, in Damascus, in Europe, at conferences, in dialogues, as the representative of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Church of

Greece, in lecture halls, and so on. Everyone listened to him as an original theologian who was traditional at the same time. I hope that his great work, which was overlooked by some while he was alive, will be appreciated now after his death.

At this moment I would like to emphasise two points that, in my opinion, are interesting.

The first is a letter that he sent in 1958, forty-three years ago, when he was a young theologian, to the monk Fr. Theoklitos of Dionysiou. In it he wrote, among other things,

"I am very sorry that we shall not celebrate Easter together this year. My thoughts are always on the Holy Mountain and whenever the opportunity arises I try to enlighten my acquaintances about it... I should be very pleased if we could correspond. I think that the devil will be sorry that we do not like the Christianity that he promotes, but what can we do? No one can please him when he wants to please God."

Commenting on this letter of his Fr. Theoklitos of Dionysiou wrote: "My good friend and most devout priest, J. Romanides, is no ordinary theologian. He learnt Orthodoxy at two or three universities and with the help of asceticism that illumines the soul. [He has] a mastery of four languages and a very solid academic background... He is literally a monk, nourished by the holy Fathers and with the holy liturgical life of the Orthodox Church, praising God 'seven times a day'."

While working on his doctoral thesis the ever-memorable Fr. John Romanides came into contact with monks who lived with noetic prayer and he learnt its secrets, the relationship between the nous and the heart. He used to visit the Holy Mountain and acquired certainty of the fundamentals of the spiritual life. That is why in his writings he continually referred to the keys to the Orthodox tradition, which are purification, illumination and glorification. His book on dogmatics is a model of Orthodox theology: a monk of the Holy Mountain said that it is the best reference book on Orthodox dogmatics, because it links theology with Orthodox hesychia.

The second point that I wish to emphasise is what he wrote about death in his doctoral thesis. Death is the result of sin, and death is overcome through the regeneration of man in Christ. He writes characteristically:

"As the Greek Fathers always taught that God did not make death and they closely associated the concepts of death, Satan and sin, Orthodox piety has always had a heroic and combative character, following in the footsteps of the Martyrs and Confessors, for whom fear and retreat in the face of death meant falling into the hands of Satan and being cut off from the faith. Orthodox Christians have always tried to trample on the sting of death and acquire carefree freedom. Continuous struggle against the tyranny of death, the devil and sin through the life of unselfish love in Christ is characteristic of the Greek patristic tradition."

This is what the ever-memorable Fr. John Romanides taught. And this is how he lived, particularly in recent times, when I was closer to him. I visited him a few months ago in the intensive care unit, where he was suffering from a severe heart problem, and he was peaceful, completely unafraid of death. The only thing that concerned him was the theological and ecclesiastical life here in our country. I visited him in his small, plain home. He had withdrawn completely from all ecclesiastical activity and was living quietly and peacefully, exactly as he had begun his theological life. The only thing that he did was to write articles on his computer and put them on his website (Romanity). At night he used to wake up, light the candles in a small candle stand and pray with the prayer-rope. He was a great theologian from the academic point of view, who prayed like a monk. This way of life reminded me a little of Papadiamantis, who lived as a monk in the world. He systematically avoided publicity and lived simply, humbly and hesychastically!

I pray to God to grant him rest for the efforts that he made to pass on Orthodoxy to others and to live its secrets. It is impossible for God to disregard people like the ever-memorable Fr. John, who was aflame to the end of his life with zeal and love for Orthodox hesychastic theology and tradition.

I pray that God may console his relatives in the flesh (his sister, his daughters and his nephew, among others) and those who had theological kinship with him. Because the ever-memorable Fr. John had many kinsmen in the faith.

Venerable Fr. John,

Recently you expressed the complaint that your labour had gone to waste, because you saw that things were taking their course without regard to the criteria of the Orthodox patristic tradition that you taught. Now, however, you will know far better that the power of faith and the authentic theological word is stronger than nuclear and chemical weapons, and that the seed of your genuine teaching will bear fruit. We your pupils, bishops and clergy, laity and monks, the whole people of God, also give our promise.

We bid you farewell on your journey from the created temple to the uncreated temple, from the tabernacle made with hands to the temple not made with hands, as you used to enjoy saying, in the hope of the resurrection and our meeting again.

End of Volume 2

to the glory of God Who is worshipped in Trinity

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